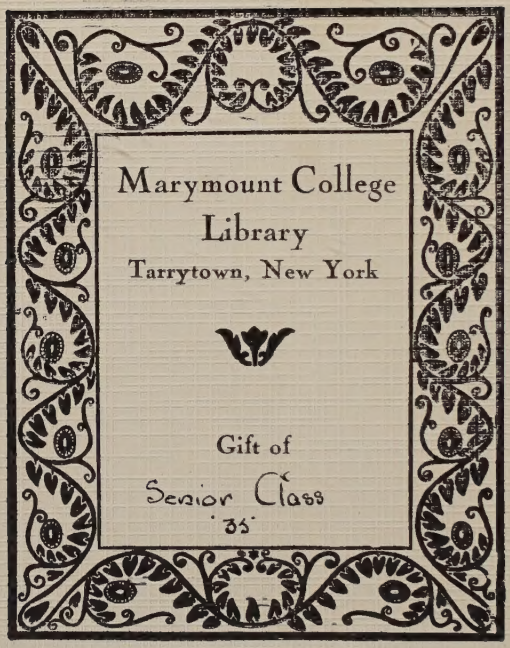
Diary and Letters of
JOSEPHINE · PRESTON · PEABODY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Diary and Letters of

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

Josephine Preston Peabody.

Diary and Letters of

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

SELECTED AND EDITED BY

CHRISTINA HOPKINSON BAKER

With Illustrations

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE

The poet Josephine Preston Peabody kept a diary from early youth. This has been available from her sixteenth year to her death in her forty-eighth year. Satisfaction of her youthful desire for gaiety and adventure, and gratification of her keenly sensitive intellectual and artistic tastes were restricted at first by very limited means. In her early youth she found few to share her interests. Her diary thus became her confidante. 'Expression is my habitual instinct — the wish to write or relate almost all of my small experiences and thoughts is strong upon me always.' This habit continued even when friends and a happy marriage had given her the sympathetic and stimulating companionship she so craved. Ease in the use of words with individuality and imagination made her, all through her life, a correspondent whose sympathetic share in her friends' lives found constant expression.

Selection from such wealth of material has been made with two thoughts in mind:

First, the outward activity of a life is largely determined by environment and by chance. It seldom truly mirrors the individual. Clearer vision of a personality is given by what is thought, desired, and enjoyed. Therefore, the following extracts from the diary and letters largely concern a poet's thoughts, her ambitions, the arts she loved, and the joys she created for herself. The outward incidents of her life are not always recorded here. They are summarized, however, with a list of her publications, at the end of the book.

Secondly, the intense urge of the creative artist dominated her life. Through deprivations in her youth; through the absorbing interests of wifehood and motherhood; in spite of the willingly accepted responsibilities of citizenship, and the ardors of the reformer; through much

physical weakness and pain; the one constant desire was for lyrical and dramatic expression — its free command of her powers her keenest joy. Friend, wife, mother, neighbor, worker for the cause of labor and of woman, she was always, primarily, the *Singer*. 'Poetry of some kind should be going on forever, like this summer sea of crickets, else nothing means anything to me but torment.' 'No joy possible to mind awake that has not something creative about it.'

In this book, therefore, emphasis has been put upon the growth of a creative artist, in the hope that young artists may here find a companion. 'Into it shall go all the young longings and sufferings and desolations of my Young, Young Days — that cause me still an anguish to look back upon, they have seemed such painful waste. But now, from this hill-top, I see how they shall not be Waste, but stuff for the best music I have in me to make, and companionship for all the Young I do so long to cherish.' 'It is worth many spiritual hardships to have given heart to a young thing for an uphill charge.'

So may she speak from these pages.

I would thank her friends who have entrusted to me her letters, and especially do I thank her sister and her husband for their coöperation.

CHRISTINA HOPKINSON BAKER

CONTENTS

PART I

Childhood and Youth 3

The Incoming Tide, 1891–1906 10

PART II

Middle Life 199

Full Tide, 1906–1916 201

PART III

The Last Years 293

Ebb Tide, 1916–1922 295

Chronology of Events and Publications 337

Index 341

ILLUSTRATIONS

Josephine Preston Peabody — *Frontispiece*
From a photograph taken at the age of thirty-one

At the Age of Seven — 4

At Eighteen — 12

Facsimile of a Letter, October 12, 1905 — 194

Facsimile of a Manuscript Poem — 218

At the Age of Thirty-Seven, with Her Daughter, Alison, and Her Son, Lionel — 250

At Forty-Three — 304

Diary and Letters of

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

* * *

PART I

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Diary and Letters of

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

* * *

PART I

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

WHAT were the inheritance and the childhood influences that made the longing for expression by beautiful sound or shape the imperative desire of Josephine Peabody's life?

Her grandfather, on her father's side, was a man of artistic tastes and temperament. Marion Peabody, the older sister, writes: 'Grandfather Francis Peabody . . . had he lived to-day, would have been a dreamy craftsman. Certain it is that he tried his long slender hands at all sorts of things . . . he made his wife's wedding slippers. . . . He played both the organ and the piano. He was a great reader, and, when not dissipating in church music, absorbed himself in books. The only social contact was the village store and post-office, and there, in the long winter evenings, the men, chiefly farmers, used to meet. Grandfather used to amuse them by relating, in serial form, the book he was then reading. Often he took his boys with him and my father said he heard most of the Waverley Novels in that way. . . . He became deeply interested in psychology, especially spiritualism, and in the latter did a good deal of investigation that, to-day, would be of use and interest, but then only caused him to be labelled "crank." Though so far from centres, he managed to hear most of the best music and to see all the great actors.' Here is the artistic temperament of the granddaughter, but from somewhere in her ancestry descended to her an indomitable will and driving ambition, to mingle with this strain.

Behind both mother and father were pioneer New England ancestors, the record of whose lives shows courage and love of adventure. The young woman whose indomitable spirit met disappointment, poverty, and the bludgeoning of physical pain with unchanged purpose and outward gaiety, was translating into modern conditions the qualities of her ancestors. A high spirit, ambition, and the sensitive perceptions of the artist — with these potentialities was the child born. What development was given by the parents?

Both daughters have described their father with adoration. He expressed artistic tastes by an absorbing interest in poetry and the theatre. The mother had a keen eye for beauty. They gave to their daughters their entire leisure. 'The two hours between our early supper and our bedtime were devoted by both father and mother to our interest and amusement, and holidays and Sundays were invariably ours.'

It was thus that Josephine received her first impetus toward plays.

'Our father and mother . . . saw all the great actors and all the best plays. It was interesting even to us children to hear them discuss the contrasts in the acting of Modjeska and Bernhardt or the psychological differences in the Hamlet of Booth and Fechter. They saw the same plays repeatedly, always from the standpoint of criticism and analysis, and my mother said they had seen "Richelieu" at least ten times and she could not remember how many times "Hamlet." I know my father had it almost by heart, as well as "Lear," and much more of both drama and verse. He showed his gay side to his children with whom he was almost never too preoccupied or too tired to play. And when we played, we played "Plays" and when he was merriest we "did Shakespeare."

'. . . Our mother gave us water-colors as soon as it was possible and taught us to use them. She was careful about color combinations and never let us daub. On rainy afternoons we either painted or had tableaux, with our mother

AT THE AGE OF SEVEN

sewing in the adjoining room. Mother would praise or criticize the result quite seriously. She taught us a great deal about color and contrast, even "subordination," in that way. I remember her saying, "Daughter, that is not a tableau of 'A Lady in a Reverie,' it's a tableau of a table with a bird cage on it; your bird cage is so important we cannot find 'A Reverie.'" Mother was very careful in giving us books. We had Shakespeare, Dickens, and Scott, arranged for children, Hawthorne's Tales, many mythologies, and the best fairy tales. I never remember a cheap story or poor illustration put into our hands.'

Upon the father's death, all changed. Outward circumstances became financially cramped, lonely and unlovely. The grief-stricken mother never regained the joyousness that had been sunshine for the growing children. In 1898 Josephine Peabody wrote to Mr. F. F. Sherman, who had asked her for an account of her life:

'I am a little Suburban . . . born in New York and lived there for the first eight years (which gave me traditions) — Shakespeare quoted by Papa, Grimm's Fairy Tales, etc., first school and first efforts in the drama. . . . For years my best ways of play were all imaginative. Dolls bored me horribly, toys also, excepting live kittens and birds. The Play was the thing! When my father died, we left New York and came to Dorchester . . . *in Darkest Suburbs*. Here began my living tragedy of suburban public school. For years I tried to console myself for the detested round of necessary studies with extra unnecessary work outside; reading, reading, writing, verses, stories and plays — always plays. . . . At last I went in town to the Girls' Latin School, where I was much happier . . . I did not finish my last two years there (my strength gave out), but came home, went on reading omnivorously, kept up my Greek along with the help of a kindly friend . . . and went to Radcliffe College in 1894, as a special student. There I took miscellaneous courses for two years and encountered several strong inspirations, notably the Elizabethan drama, the old Miracle and Morality Plays. Then home

again, to the old tale of reading and solitary writing and journeys about town after music and pictures and people's faces, and the effort to climb over environment . . .

'My writing has been a solitary growth. Not from lack of friends, but because all, with two or three exceptions, had their interests quite apart from these things. But in 1894 Mr. Horace Scudder first accepted a poem of mine for the "Atlantic Monthly," and to the friendship so begun I owe more than I can say of cordial interest and warming faith and good counsel.

'I have always wanted to do many things, from my youth up. Every form of expression is beautiful to me; and music has perhaps been the greatest enrichment — what little I have heard; it almost takes the place of people and far countries (I make this emphatic because it's one of the Great Things in my Little Past). Pictures we have always loved as a family, but the number of times I have gone to Music Hall on a "stand up," to have a discouraged-looking world builded anew!

'Mine was a patch-work education, and my self-chosen reading was as fantastical and as grasping. I did not really love to read poetry at an early age; I thought I did. But in truth I didn't read it. I would start in on a poem and from that beatific window my spirit flew out . . . the poetry of Shakespeare and of the Bible are my two most constant inspirations now. But the journey and the side-tracks and by-paths of a wilful reader! . . . Of our later English poets, Blake, Keats, Shelley, Browning, especially Keats and Browning, the dissimilar!

'. . . And even now I've left things out. I have a wheel; I swim, when I can; love to dance when there's an opportunity, and dance by myself when there isn't; love animals, love out-of-doors, especially the sea; love to saunter and stroll and sit on fences and go brook-following. In brief, am inclined to like everything . . . oh, P.S . . .! and, like everybody else, I wish to write plays!'

Her reading, through these formative years, was characteristic of the period. A note-book records six hundred

books read between 1888 and 1893 — among them, ranging from philosophy and history, through novels and poetry, essays and drama, there is a significant omission — science. In that period an understanding of scientific data and of the scientific attitude of mind was inaccessible to the average person to a degree amazing to us now. This gave to her view of the world an unreality that hampered her in her genuine desire to understand life. Of this she was conscious, though attributing it more to the narrow range of her early life. 'I desire above all things to deal with things that concern all people. I don't want to be a "literary poet." Heaven forbid!' In the 'Envoy' to 'The Wayfarers' she expresses her longing to be a sharer of the common heart.

'Thou Knowest, O my own Unsung,
I longed to speak a common tongue,
To set this reed
Unto the voice of Everyday
With its familiar yea and nay,
Unto the common heart and need.
Yet oftentimes, indeed, I seem
To dream; — to dream . . .
How over walls of paradise
The darling trees lean down to shed
A petal. And I wake, with eyes
Uncomforted.
Ah, Beautiful, be mild to teach
This newcomer the household speech;
So I someday with better grace
May take the bounty of the place:
Someday with eyes that know the years
I may have wiser words to sing,
Nor eat my bread with furtive tears
Of home-longing.
But go where lights and highways call,
To hear the soothsay of them all,
And rest by any door;
With hands outheld and heart uplift.
To take, and welcome for a gift,
The wisdom of the one day more.'

Also characteristic of the eighties and nineties was the

conception of woman as at once the inspiring angel and the inevitable victim of man. To this she reacted with an ideal of comradeship between man and woman, which, to her uncomprehending distress, usually made shipwreck upon her charm; and with a burning intolerance of legal injustice to women. This impersonal indignation impelled her advocacy of Suffrage and later of the Woman's Party.

By her twenty-third year she had written 168 poems, several of which were published in magazines of high standard. After strict, critical excision and improvements, she published the best of these in her first volume, 'The Wayfarers,' published in 1898. These were predominantly lyrical. She was, however, already attempting the dramatic form. 'Perhaps it is silly of me to dream of the drama, and yet I think I am a well-endowed child who can do things if I only *will*, like a tramp sitting on a gold mine, and I almost think I have the historical imagination; only I haven't got the history.' Still less did she have knowledge of men. Yet the young woman, who was found among overturned tables and chairs, trying to 'royster' alone, succeeded in infusing into the beauty and grace of 'Fortune and Men's Eyes' and 'Marlowe' (poetic plays written and published in this period) a robust vigor. Always, however, the lyric continued, as a form of her expression. The volumes, 'Fortune and Men's Eyes' and 'The Singing Leaves,' published in 1903, gathered up the lyrics written since 'The Wayfarers.' In these years she also wrote 'Wings,' a one-act play in verse, and 'Pan,' a choric idyl, performed in Ottawa in 1904.

To few have been given such harmony of spirit and of physical embodiment as was hers in her youth. Through the years of her young womanhood she was the very expression of poetry. Her slender body and exquisite face, with an elusive, bird-like quality of poised or flitting grace, gave also the impression of unresting mental activity, and of will, like a delicately chased, swift, and keen-edged sword. She seemed to radiate light and to glow as translucent porcelain.

Everything close to her must be beautiful. Since poverty forbade fashion, then beauty must be expressed by individuality in dress. If outside joys were limited, then every day, as well as holiday and Saint's day, must bring symbolic beauty and rejoicing into daily routine. Memorable was the charm of her handwriting, deliberately changed from the conventional school calligraphy into curves of beauty, and the placing of words upon paper with such instinct for design that the mere aspect of the page delights.

But now let the young girl of seventeen speak . . .

THE INCOMING TIDE

1891–1906

'A creator will be a creator, no matter what his environment. He will create out of whatever material he finds about him. If he is denied happiness, he must needs make lovely shapes out of pain.'

'My life has all been Inner, Inner, Inner, and that from no choice of mine, since I have a mind for high adventure and have had a soul knit unto the drama from the tender age of four. The ideal life is something like that of Hans Sachs, poet and cobbler, and I am still restless and unfulfilled for lacking the cobbling element. Whereby I mean, not commonplace (enough of that!) but befriending work with hands.' (Letter to F. F. Sherman.)

'I'm so much of a pagan that there seems to me something degrading about a hurt that you cannot be rid of — I feel, like an Israelite, that people with wounds are unfit to serve in the Tabernacle.'

May, 1891. Lately words have taken the most appalling significance and distinction for me — everything has. I have thought of M.'s hair as a mass of deep arpeggios — with the delicate little cadenzas around her temples!

May, 1891. Very dreary weather. I have been in high spirits lately, but yesterday the wind and the rain had such an effect on me that I was full fain to weep. I felt like a little cat when it opens its mouth to mew and doesn't mew audibly.

May, 1891. I declare I simply hate myself for not being beautiful. If I had only been made larger and plumper with smaller hands and classic features and a bewitching mouth . . . mine is so changeable and big.

I felt that I could exist without immediate beauty, fame, riches, etc., and that the process of working toward these might be a fairy tale.

June, 1891. There is my writing table! Piled high with everlasting MSS. — scraps of music-paper and unanswered letters; on top of them a French Testament cov-

ered with one or two little French tales, an Italian grammar . . . an Ugo Bassi's sermon in the hospital; next, Emery's 'Elements of Harmony,' under Virgil, a Revised Testament and 'Spells or Laws of Change.' The 'Autocrat of the Breakfast Table' jostles Marcus Aurelius.

March, 1892. It is winter and I am rather blue, in an earthy way — and busy. Yet, as far as my poesy goes, I seem to live in a state of continual *ecstasy*. I feel as if there were an angel at my side, always whispering to me.

April, 1892. O, my Guardian Angel, let me be always YOUNG. I thank the stars and the power behind them that I am Young now.

Let me be always so!

Let me not believe — of all who are crowned with genius — that with fame they have also learned dishonor — that he whose music brings souls nearer heaven will never enter there himself, that this woman's voice is like a water lily floating above slime. Let me not believe that all are soiled — and in believing soil my own soul!

Rather — let me wander through the world — singing — with my eyes fixed upon a beautiful mirage. Ah, but let them cry 'Mirage, mirage, mirage!'

Thou, Thou, who madest all, I believe!

May, 1892. I wish I had some one here to whom I might say all that puzzled me — all that troubled me. I am tired of writing about myself. . . . My rhyme ideas are indistinct, only a sweet hazy tangle of dim impressions and strivings. And after all this empty-handedness is a little trying sometimes.

I *could* study Anabasis, I suppose, but I feel that I have ἐξελαύνει-ed quite enough for my happiness already. And besides the school week yawns for my remains. Oh! for vacation! O school, my school, thou art much — but June is more. You journal, I don't wonder that you wear an expression of disapproval on your blank young face.

I should be patient and duteous, I know. I should work hard at my algebra and my Greek. — But, my dear, don't you know?

I'm seventeen, seventeen, *seventeen!*

July, 1892. . . . Ended in ignominious depression and longing for the unattainable.

(If I might only say 'unattainable' with honest determination. But my soul adds a number of little dots and an interrogation point in parenthesis!)

August, 1892. Received home again the Ships I sent to the C—— so many months ago. Was glad to know that they had not been lost! So!

When it is cold, I suppose I shall send away more, on this fruitless voyage.

It saps one's courage sometimes, one's stamp supplies too — but for all that, we will continue, my dear. How slowly the mills of God grind!

August, 1892. One of the sweetest little demonstrations of nature one misses when one covers one's head. To feel the wind blow over your hair gloriously, to feel the sunshine breathe warmly on it; the pine fragrance waft incense over it, the leaves touch it softly — the spaces between the branches spill sunlight upon it — ah, I love that!

September, 1892. . . . This morning while I was sitting in the sun, such rush of new life, and life-glory came over me! It is always so. A sudden new strength fills my veins and for a little while I am physically stimulated so that the blood rushes to my cheeks and I feel that laugh bubbling up from somewhere.

January, 1893. But how a walk on a day like this shows me that delight of — what? Dryad-life? What does one call it? I only mean that, walking in the wind, over the snow, the opal wintry sky smiling at one — one cannot understand how people ever wish to fall in love — how they can ever be married. 'Oh,' I said to myself — 'Even if you loved any one enough, it would be imprisonment in a garden! How can you *belong* to anybody, *anybody!*'

January, 1893. I remember [1] the atmosphere of poetry that grew into a summer noon making all silences vocal — all grass blades eloquent.

[1] After a Symphony concert.

AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN

And I felt for a moment that *apotheosis* that is the dearest gift of a genius to the public. I was among gods. And yet, something cried out within me — the positive existence it was —

God let me sing!
I have songs to utter!
I have something to say; —
My dumbness cries to be heard.

Oh, I have something to *tell* — the meaning of youth, the symmetry of life, the gladness of a single soul at least in life. Let me sing!

February, 1893. One does not expect things in this world; one hopes and pays car-fares.

Only I can never rid myself of a feeling that I am being gently *taught* so many things!

April, 1893. O Angel — I gave up all idea of a violin long ago — and then of piano even — and then of harmony — and then Girls' Latin School with attendant visions of college, just for one or two courses! O Angel, don't you see? Now I am growing up! I am *expected* to know something. 'A well-stocked mind first,' says every one when I mention writing.

And do I not want one? Am I not waiting and trying? And I shall be nineteen in May!

You may say, 'You look like fifteen — ten and a half' — it is true. But I *am* older. 'The training which your talent deserves' is dinned into my ears constantly. Have I not heard it enough? As for the talent — that may or may not be — I only am a small person with a terrible tendency to make a great noise over everything I see just as if no one had seen it before. But for just the training that any intelligence deserves — Angel, when can I have that?

June, 1893. A little illness is a profitable thing when one is comfortable and weak and does not read, but lies in bed, content to be there, and drift into a state of otherwise unreasonable peace — and thinks, thinks, thinks so lazily that everything in the universe seems to be in its proper place — and Time a silly word invented by Old People.

July, 1893. As that wail [1] began its climbing insistence of anguish — one could not tell whether it was more sweet than painful, or no. . . . I had never heard or imagined a cry like that. . . . I was almost aghast. I did not know that men and women ever felt that — felt what the music cried aloud.

I felt suddenly a sense of utter youth and inexperience as a little grass blade feels sometimes, when it awakens late at night for some reason and hears, far up in the darkness, the terrible voice of passing winds that have blown around the earth and learned its story. . . . It was as if an unknown Might seized my little blindfold self and held and shook me mightily by my hair.

August, 1893. High-tide! It was needed sorely enough, my guardian-angel knows! Isn't it glorious that such splendid days are bound to come! With me, they are not the result of changeful moods. They are a kind of celestial *pay-day!*

Once in many, many days — a few times a year — a sudden flood of revelation irradiates — electrifies — my whole being. I do not know how it comes — it is sometimes with a great physical thrill of joy — sometimes with a sudden thought, and oh, how the tide comes in!

August, 1893. Hollis gave me a deserted bird-nest when we were out walking one day. It gave me such a queer feeling of inexplicable love and tenderness to take the thing in my two hands. It was as if some one laughed suddenly and softly with tears in her eyes. The cradle of little Sing-Things with Wings! My poet's corner is the place for it. Oh, I cannot become accustomed to wearing a human shape and having the birds afraid of me, when I come near. They hurt my feelings.

September, 1893. While we were coming up on the train I remembered suddenly how I amused myself on the similar journey, years ago, when we saw these mountains first. I was eight. As we were starting away from the house, Mamma saw the book which formed my baggage. It was

[1] First experience of *Wagner* — the violins.

a treasure of mine — an old school singing book of Grandfather M.'s. It contained the words and music of 'Merrily row' and 'I would that my love,' etc.

'You don't want this,' said Mamma.

'Yes, yes, I do!' I cried, and despite the efforts of all I clung to my useless book.

I could not understand what any of the notes stood for on the keyboard. But I could read words and the bars had a fascination for me. So all the way up — while the others were reading or talking — I sat with the book open in my hands and sang uninterruptedly every verse — my small piping entirely concealed by the din of the train. I hadn't the slightest idea of the real music, but I just sang straight along. . . . It makes me laugh — I am glad that I remember it — it gave me so much pleasure. That green singing book went with me always — afterwards.

September, 1893. 'It is queer,' said I, 'but I always go through a certain mental experience when I think of the trumpet and its scarlet. I instinctively feel that my eyes are closed and the sun beats through the lids, and I am aware of nothing but the scarlet — the blood-red.'

I asked them if they had ever noticed the suggestion of shape form in these sound combinations. . . . They had not, so I told them, as I am much interested in it — about first seeing it in these words of Rossetti's — 'Slim-curved lute.' They so perfectly expressed the shape of a lute — the *im* sound being flat and straight (for the neck), the outward curve of the *ur*, the inward curve *u*. It sounds fantastic, but it is true. To me the short vowel sounds are straight.

Parenthetically, I must not look forward to the winter. But, oh! — to be at the Symphonies — with all that hidden treasure of such phantasy — or research — as you please — oh! to find more, more, more, of the relations between that inarticulate soul of music and its poetical interpretation! To stand in the old place while the lights are being turned higher and see, one by one, the musicians edging across the great stage, among the seats — some

with the great shining beloved 'cellos, some with the little-great violins — to hear the last trial of their strings — the confused soft utterances of the *g*, *d*, *a*, *e* —! It turns my cheeks scarlet to think of it. Some people do not like it. To me it is a revelation of something that I cannot describe.

I wish that I may be great enough to see all Life so, some day — to perceive the great elemental harmony through and beneath discord. And then, every now and then — there is such a deep, soft word from a viol — and it seems as if one heard the wandering notes struck from the gamut of all human experience, sometimes bewildering, but full of promise, full of welcome.

'Come up hither, thou child, and behold many things!' And when the revelation comes!

. . . But it will never do to look forward so to winter.

September, 1893. Yet another nice talk with dear Mrs. M. All about 'verities' and books and things — no — not things merely, but wing-things. . . . She spoke of my small pipings again. I am so glad that she saw any suggestions of the beautiful in them. I told her (as she asked me) that she might always show them to whomsoever she would, and that I should be glad. Because I shall probably never have them printed — never be able to reach people in any other way. And I so wish to have spoken a little to others when I die.

September, 1893. I find to-day that I am not to teach the children.

Some young ladies have opened a day school near here and the W.'s very naturally choose to send them there.

I wish I did not have such an imbecile habit of counting my chickens before they are hatched.

I was so thankful, so radiant at this prospect of making a little money. I had pictured myself independent as to clothes — indulging for a treat in a Symphony stand-up every week, and in, oh, such Christmas fun!

I had thought — oh, let it go!

It didn't happen.

It seemed, then, too good to be true. So it was.

After I had learned this, this A.M., I experienced the usual sensation of mirth and hurt-ed-ness.

All my little disappointments are so grotesque in a way. . . . It was especially funny because I had begun to look forward so to my New York visit which I had expected to pay for, for one thing — to the ring I was going to give M. for Christmas, and to many other things, including music, music, music on stand-ups.

September, 1893. I began the season with some hours of painful rectitude. I arranged and *cleared out* my top bureau drawer.

I resolved that I would make a stupendous exertion to keep it in mathematical order.

I overhauled my desk and arranged that.

I meekly wrote such letters as were imperative.

I went on small errands with the promptness of a Newfoundland. I dusted things on a heroic scale.

It is very hard to be good.

. . . To be frank, I will confess that I don't think I should be so good if I did not feel very poor. But poor people ought to be good because they can't have Symphony tickets or new books or lessons in things or Soulé photographs — but 'be good and you will be happy.' Never having tried the experiment to a very great extent until this year, I am still bewildered at times.

But I doubt not that the time will come when, instead of going to Symphony, even on a stand-up, I shall derive immense spiritual joy from dusting the whole lower floor with a smile upon my face — or pulling out the fingers of cast-off gloves and stretching them and putting them in a glove box and putting the cover on the box. Human nature has such adaptability.

We beggars have good times over nothing with a vengeance. I went in town to-day to one of my last French lessons and wandered about on my way to the Athenæum. People home again, shops full of winter goods, flowers being sold on the streets, ahai, I like that! I did a large amount of mental shopping. It is the best kind. We are

always told, you know, that anticipation is better than reality; and, then, one's purchases never have to be brushed and mended and have the buttons sewed on.

September, 1893. I *will* remember that here, as well as in the domain of intellectual life, that which is beyond my own control is for my own individual discipline — it is the way in which *my* life is to be taught, just as much as a special course of study adapted for my working need.

To believe this is to be happy.

. . . Music is something that I cannot pursue by any of my own mental efforts. I thought I almost earned it last year by standing up, all the time, to hear it. This year — absolute fact — and a funny one — the price of admission alone is beyond me, as a weekly indulgence. But, J. P. P., what if you don't understand? You wish and expect to understand everything? Yes. And you cannot. There's the rub again.

But at least I intend to study Greek and philosophy this winter. The former by running over grammar again, by myself, and latterly going to the Athenæum several mornings a week and making use of the Greek there — with English translations to refer to for corrections. The philosophy I have begun to read, and to read it I shall continue. If I so tide over the winter — something good may come in time.

Only remember, remember, J. P., prosperity is best for some — for many. It must be that you need this vacancy, this barrenness, this hunger and thirst.

September, 1893. Every book — true book — that I read torments me with its suggestions of infinite things to be learned — a thousand other books to be read. My mind seems to grasp hungrily in all directions. It frightens me.

October, 1893. As usual I came home [1] with a thousand unsingable songs making a haze of music in my ears, like all the outdoor life in summer. . . .

Oh, for a style simple and lucid as Tourgenef. . . . I should love to make a little book with not one useless

[1] From the Athenæum Library.

sentence in it — English simple, perfect in its adaptation to my meaning, well balanced and *elastic*, above all things. . . . How I should love to eschew descriptions saving such brief and vivid items, well selected, as should convey impressions rather than details. I would be an impressionist in prose.

I left a note for Abby in the 'hedge,' as we call it, i.e., the especial crevice in a special shelf where we are wont to leave each other billet-doux, writ in a marvellous phonetic manner with Greek letters.

We devised this scheme so that an a librarian exhumed our notes he or she would not have the patience to read them.

A little mystery is a delightsome thing.

October, 1893. Manuscript returned from the 'Atlantic' — it was the 'Woman of Three Sorrows.'

But behold, a *written* note therewith running as follows. 'Dear Madam, we are sorry to have to return anything which we like in so many respects, but the small space at the "Atlantic's" disposal for verse reminds us that we should be ready to defend at all points the poems we accept. None the less we are Faithfully yours, The Editors.'

Hurray! This sounds encouraging.

Forthwith I sent out a number of rhymes to various places.

Oh, to write one *perfect* thing. Oh, to write one *nearly* perfect thing. Angel, do let me have some material success for a tonic! And Angel, let me write, write, write!

October, 1893. Mrs. G.'s baby was born dead. That has made the day a struggle for me. . . . What difficulty is there in the Thirty-Nine Articles? It is a thing like this that breaks one's soul in two. The Apostolic Succession seems perfectly reasonable and natural to me; the martyrdom of womanhood — I say it honestly and with an honest horror of my own feeling — *that* puts a horror between me and my idea of God.

November, 1893. I begin to feel conscience-stricken. I am becoming a wretched book-worm. I did not realize

$499

how deeply rooted this consuming habit was until I awoke to the feeling of blank misery that one thought awakened—

'I cannot take many books to Florida.' Good Heavens!

I found myself in my bath to-day with a volume of Herodotus, before I knew it.

Every spare moment, every half-hour in the horse-car, every ten minutes while candy is cooking on the stove — all are utilized.

I read sometimes four books at a time. . . . At night, too, a fragment of Keats with my few verses of the New Testament — or some of that glorious old poet David.

November, 1893. I should like to feel welcome for my own sake when I go into a room — not because I am a 'trump' to have effaced myself for all others for so long: I should like to be able to play for somebody, not accompaniments: I should like some high fantastical news to recount and to have others 'listen so beautifully.' I should like to have some one give me whole and material sympathy while I related long annoyances to him, her, or it. I should like to be a Positive for a while.

Oh, that is just it, you Egoist!

Of course you would. You would like to harness up the Crab, the Serpent, the Bear, and the Scorpion to the wain of Boötes: you would like to don Orion's belt and take a long-tailed comet for a lash and go racing meteors in August — wouldn't you?

(Yes, I would.)

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET
DORCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
November 30, 1893

Mr. Scudder,
DEAR SIR:

In answer to your kind suggestion that I should 'try again,' I send more verses, although I do not know whether they are better or worse than the many that have failed. But it would encourage me so much — if, *some day*

(do 'some days' ever bring you a moment's leisure?) you would tell me, briefly as you will, the especial fault that you see in my MSS.

I should not ask this, if I were not honestly in need of a word of criticism. But I am nineteen years old and very much in earnest; — and, when that is the case, it is hard to realize that a whole love for one's work will not atone for deficiencies in *technique*.

Yours very sincerely

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

To Mary E. Merritt

December 30, 1893

...Mr. Scudder seemed glad that I had brought rhymes, and laid them away to read, and took my Florida address, and gave me advice — delightful advice — and said that the 'A. M.' would be able to print some of my work some day; and accompanied me to the outer door when I left. Peace be with him! It kept me warm all day.

I truly think that he will befriend me. He has done so already, with his interest and advice. And, not to tire you with more of this — I am very happy.

A little invitation to 'come up higher' was sorely needed; — so it came. And oh, what a perfect refreshment — what mental food and drink it is to talk about the *artistic* side of It — instead of the 'salable.' That one half-hour healed my wings to such an extent that I think all the feathers will grow again!...

December, 1893. I could not make you understand: but every little while I seem to leave all interest in everyday matters, and enter my 'silence,' a certain stillness and dumbness and expectancy that comes before I can write much. I have to come *outside* before I can talk to people.

January, 1894. Oh, and New Year, let me sing! Lift me out of this silence! I have waited — I have tried — I have listened!

Let me sing!

January, 1894. I am having to learn cards. It is good for me, but it goes against the grain. I hate, I abominate, I *detest* cards as an habitual amusement. They seem the destruction of all original employment, of all interesting conversation, all social life, all possibilities.

To Horace E. Scudder

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
January 7, 1894

MY DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

Your letter pleased me more than I can tell you; — and it was especially kind of you to write so soon.

Indeed I am glad of and most grateful for your criticism, and only one accusation came near meeting some small resentment on my part! However amused you may be thereat, I refuse to believe that there is anything hysterical about that 'Dream-Climbing' one! It truly was written in a mood of great sternness and austerity! But I laughed much over your mention of the 'plump address "God, I have climbed upon a dream so long" —! — ' and I was glad to be warned in time concerning both of these faults.

. . . You asked me, when I saw you, what poets I read most; and I am obliged to confess that the unwonted experience of searching for the 'Atlantic' office had driven all ideas from my mind — all recollections, in fact — saving one of my own youth and ignorance. But now I can answer. After Shakespeare, and Homer, whom I have just begun to read in the original, I love Spenser — Keats and Shelley — Browning (what a droll combination!) — and our own Emerson and Lowell. As I said, I believe, I am not sufficiently acquainted with Chaucer to feel that I possess for my *own* his atmosphere, although all that I understand, and much that I don't understand has an impalpable charm for me. Even his spelling is fascinating! (How much more unthinking and winsome — how much rounder and downier — 'brids' are than 'birds'!)

I don't know anything at all about the old dramatists — Webster and Marlowe and Fletcher. As for Ben Jonson I *tried* to read some of him lately — and had the untamed ignorance to be thankful that he *was* 'rare.' More than one Ben Jonson would not be good for the human race — it seemed to me.

Also I would give all of 'Paradise Lost' for 'Samson Agonistes,' 'Comus,' 'Lycidas,' and the shorter of Milton's Poems. Is that heretical? I would not make such a sweeping judgment if it were not for his Adam and Eve — who seem distinctly narrow-minded and pitiable.

By this time, you will think me an apostate, decidedly; but open confession is good for the soul. I must add, therefore, that, much as I love many of Wordsworth's poems, and perfect as I recognize them to be — I do not wholly appreciate him. His self-satisfaction and utter lack of humor repel me to such an extent that I feel them when they, doubtless, are not present. Conceit seems a death-blow to the *inner* life of poetry, however its outer semblance may keep the appearance of breadth and color. And how can a nature be great of breadth — symmetrical, sympathetic, without a quick and appreciative sense of fitness and unfitness. Of course you will see that I mean — *not* that I would have more of his verse deal with anything humorous, but that, if he had been so gifted, he would surely never have so wronged the eternal fitness of things as to write, 'Oh, mercy! to myself I said . . . If Lucy should be dead! . . .' or, 'There's a lark that hangs high; it has sung for *four years!*'

I have demanded too much of your time, with my lengthy confessions, dear Mr. Scudder. But forgive it this time!

I send you back 'The Shepherd Girl,' as you so kindly asked. I have altered it, as you see. 'Where any cowslip led' I allowed to remain for a second consideration, as it was not introduced under necessity, but because I wished to indicate the bright little shallow-rooted hopes that beckoned the shepherd girl and her browsing sheep thither.

If you still dislike it, however, let me know, please, and some other idea may come to my rescue. Oh, and in the last line of the first stanza I thought of substituting 'lonely' for 'bitter.' Do you think it would be a little more suggestive?

This 'Weaver' thing is quite long, but Mamma liked it and I am wondering if you will. It was written under difficulties, though; with half a dozen people chattering in the next room, and asking me what I was writing and whether it was verse or prose and what it was about!

My thanks again, and good-bye!

I used to say to myself that it was much better for me to meet with ill-success and disappointment. 'So shall I grow best,' I would explain. Since your letters — it is a droll fact — I have changed all my arguments with wonderful alacrity. 'Encouragement agrees with me!' And if you truly think that I may be a Poet, some day — that will make me very happy.

Yours most sincerely

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

January, 1894. Still silent. Oh, my 'Dæmon Poesy,' why torment me so? Have I not been leal and true? Do I not love you whole-heartedly? Have I not served faithfully?

But let me sing.

January, 1894. Much as this thirst for speech torments me, I know how good for me it is to experience this unthinking, unaspiring life for a while, just a while. It is good for me to play with the children and to bend all my energies toward teaching them and helping them climb a little if I can. No one can realize more than I what a strange life this uneventful one of mine has been so far — almost unintelligible. I have never been moved by any human interest. My deepest happiness and deepest sorrows have been of dreams. . . . In the midst of my own mental poverty — material disappointment — social barrenness, 'real' insufficiency on all sides, I have felt an inner radiance and

warmth of happiness that was a glory to me. What my life lacks that it should measure all things negatively, I do not know. But I think it must be simple direct material work, work with live human beings, work with my hands — *Ballast.*

To Minnie Ward Jackson

THE ALTAMONTE, ALTAMONTE SPRINGS
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, 1894

MY VERY DEAR MINNIE:

. . . It was very kind of you to write at all; for I was disappointed not to see you before I went and show you Mr. Scudder's letters. It would be imbecile to conceal the fact that they made me wonderfully happy. For until one has received from a higher authority an acknowledgment of one's right to become a singer some day — there is always a feeling of presumption and doubt and loneliness mingled with one's desire for song and love of the work.

I don't mean to say that I believe myself a Poet, by any means, by any means: but his words of commendation and belief gave me a little beatitude.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FLORIDA
February 1, 1894. P.M.

DEAR FELLOW-PASSENGER:

Great mirth shook me this evening, when a 'New England Magazine'[1] arrived, and I beheld your valentine and mine riding along side by side — sole occupants of the Omnibus!

I pictured you shaking with mirth, as I shook, and groaning over the small space, and asking mine to 'move up' — and realizing that they are both as 'spoony' as can be.

Nor is this all: — mine was not permitted to offer the

[1] Each had a poem printed in the 'Omnibus,' a department of the *New England Magazine.*

sub-title 'Valentine for Her' as an excuse. All of my acquaintances will think that something serious has taken place. Yours is ten times better, Gale, dear, bless you, but I am glad that we shall always have the joke to laugh over, for it is certainly droll and pleasant.

Hast been remunerated for thy flight? According to appearances and the hard times, I expect we will have to pay fares for our Omnibus excursion.

Ai me! It is too funny.

The boarders are all wondering why I smote the magazine with the smite of desperate mirth and then relapsed into a prolonged fit of laughter.

Do you get out at Boston? I suppose so. Au revoir. Cold day, isn't it? Yes. Hi there, conductor! Good-night!

J. P. P.

P.S. I ought to be remunerated for my name. It is worth more than the Work — takes up more space, too, and is more suggestive of talent.

If you get more money than I do, you must go halves: I won't stand it.

What shall we buy?

February, 1894. 'The Shepherd Girl' is accepted by the 'Atlantic Monthly.' Yes, hurray! It is no dream — and such a charming letter from Mr. S.!

. . . I say to myself, oh! I am Happy. I am so Happy! . . . Now, that 'Atlantic Monthly.' Did I not truly say that I was happy when I learned that one of my own little songs had found a home in it? Yes, and why was I happy? Truly it was not because I shall see myself in print there. Truly it wasn't because I have attained it, at nineteen.

But I feel that somebody who knows has recognized my *right* to make songs. I have, as it were, received my patent of Poethood (if men can give it to me). And it makes me gladly aware of all the songs that are roosting patiently in the corners of my mind!

To Horace E. Scudder

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FLORIDA
February 23, 1894

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

It is needless to say that your news of that disconsolate 'Shepherd Girl' made me very happy indeed — so happy that the vision of that 'Shepherd Girl' weeping 'bitter tears' on her page of the 'Atlantic' seems droll enough! . . .

Do you know, your mention of that perfect snow-storm made me homesick. Do you really imagine that I enjoy this southern languor? Far from it. What has Florida brought me? Patience. Patience with people and with things. The eternal silences of this place wall in one's very mind. It is impossible to *write* anything. I have made a number of little songs, and a one-act prose thing that infuriates me — it is so inadequate. Yet I have a thousand and one ideas that clamor to be written; — only they *cannot* be written here.

I do not exaggerate when I say that it is torment. I want to write a cycle of little — (here I am reduced to 'things' again), interspersed with songs — the whole to be called 'In the City Marketplace.' Now, I am going to make my City; — not even Florida shall prevent me. But — ay me! — I feel that there is a hand laid over my mouth; — and 'The Water Carrier' and 'The Vender of Doves' and the one who 'passes in the dark, singing' are all ready to sing. I am going to send you the little Proem — to see whether or no you approve of it. The worst of that set of 'poems' is that, good or bad, they *must* be written. I can't help it. . . .

Do you know those Roumanian Folk-Songs, gathered together under the title of 'The Bard of the Dimbo-Vitza' by Hélène Vacaresco? I have read and re-read them. Anything more primitive — more full of a *naïveté* that touches one — a pathos that *breaks one in two* — anything that seemed to touch the very root of poetry more — I have never seen. I am going to read all the folk-songs

that I can reach, now. Do tell me, please, dear Mr. Scudder, if you know of many more.

I did not mean to chatter to such an extent, but it is delicious to be allowed to talk! No one talks here (excepting Miss Anderson and her mother). The other people are struck with great amazement and terror at a prospective conversation — they turn and flee to the euchre-tables. How much these inveterate card-players miss; — don't they? And how ever will they be able to recognize living kings and queens and knaves, when they meet them?

I wonder whether you will like this little 'Caravans.' I never wrote anything like it before; — in fact, I did not intend to write it in verse. But there was a queer little paragraph in my journal, and I found that it had shaken itself into a metrical form unintentionally.

I have taken a great deal of your time, have I not? But you will forgive that, I know.

Many thanks, and a Good-morning to you!

Yours very sincerely —
and gratefully too —
JOSEPHINE PEABODY

P.S. After all, I forgot to thank you for the suggestions as to 'The Weavers.' I shall profit thereby, truly. I began to patch them a little, this morning.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

THE ALTAMONTE, ALTAMONTE SPRINGS
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
March 5, 1894

MY DEAR A. F. B.!

. . . I shudder for the fate of 'Naomi.' That ingenuous young creature will appear later — I don't know when. Oh, and *do* spend thirty-five cents on an April 'Atlantic,' when it's out, A. F. B. You must, you know. I'm in it. Now don't dare to imagine that I have gone up in my balloon yet; because I shall probably *never* get into the

'Atlantic' again. ('Cold water on the north shore.') And so you mustn't miss this opportunity of seeing your little friend occupying her own, own page of the 'A. M.'

That's my only news.

I still ponder the delicate degrees of difference between printed slips and type-written slips and written slips: — the amount of importance to be attached to 'The Editor' — in view of 'per J.'; and the especial significance of 'Your obliged and obedient servants,' as distinguished from 'Very truly yours.' If I could ONLY get something into the 'Century' or 'Scribner's' and the 'A. M.' *all at once!* But the Phœnix is not to have its tail salted, nowadays. Ha! The Phœnix rises from ashes. . . . Might I be that Phœnix, myself? — Ai — I have my doubts — strange though it seem.

I *will* not recast that miserable play, tell the Scribe. I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retreat one single inch! The sight of it is noxious — to me — and, one would even say, to the united body of American editors. As for the play that I skeletonized down here, I forgot all about it subsequently, and I am now too completely a victim to mental enervation to round out its rather lachrymose one act. . . .

I just rose to look at my calendar, and saw that the First of April will fall on a Sunday. Won't you come and see me, A. F. B., Sunday afternoon? I shall have been home (D. V.) two days, so I could not leave Mamma quite long enough to be gone for the afternoon — but you will come, won't you, and we will celebrate. That would be fun.

Some day, we will go to the Athenæum reading-room, and hunt up our Valentines, and your Traveller's Record poems — and my stories (if the A. has them. I doubt it), and my little 'A. M.' rhyme — and we'll laugh a great deal. Perhaps, too, by that time, we May Have Had Something Else Accepted. We will walk up the precious corkscrew staircase that winds past the French highlands and the Biography perch and the Mathematics catacomb,

to Religion, Witchcraft, and Demonology. We will make for Aidenn with the big window in it, and nibble our pens for an hour, without writing anything; we will creak about in the gallery and drop books on the librarian's head; we will come down and pass 'Wharton on Homicide,' and traverse the dark staircase in search of a sensation. Nor is this all, A. F. B. — nor is this all. I will take you to Huyler's, and we will have a soda, A. F. B. — we will go halves on one, because, as usual, I shall have no money. The scant remnant that accompanied me homeward will have leaked out, because of Camelots and Canterburies — and little lives of Keats — and little Chaucerses and Shakespeareses and such. But I shall be happy — oh, so happy! At least, I *think* I shall. . . .

To Horace E. Scudder

THE ALTAMONTE, ALTAMONTE SPRINGS
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
March 14, 1894

MY DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

. . . Naturally, I was much pleased with her [1] appearance in the 'Atlantic.' I hate to have to read my own verses in manuscript, but they look so much more hopeful in print — and in *such* print!

You were more than good to criticise the rhymes so soon: I did not expect it, and, indeed, I am aware of my selfishness in occupying so much of your time. But philanthropy is always imposed upon, dear Mr. Scudder; — only, the rôle of impostor is new to me!

Now that Mrs. Andrews has gone, there is no one here who will talk about the 'dæmon poesy.' That makes me feel very lonesome; — and, moreover, that is why I am writing again so soon.

I laughed all the evening about your criticism on the metre of 'Caravans.' Nothing could be truer. It *was* camel-like; it not only *lumbered* — it was *humpy!* But I set to work on it immediately, and would you mind re-reading it, to see whether or no you think it improved?

[1] 'The Shepherd Girl.'

It is a queer rhythm, certainly, but I think that it is more truly a *rhythm* now. I varied the last foot of each line on purpose. But the general construction is

⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ / ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ / – ⏑ – ⏑ –

I bother you with these repairs and patches because I am so anxious to do justice to the thought. I will not let 'Caravans' alone until it is as good as I can make it.

I could not resist sending you this 'Persephone,' which I wrote a day or two ago. I *cannot* let those old myths alone; and the especial profanity of it is that, always, the untold part of the story appeals to me most. I love to think of Persephone as one closely akin to and beloved by the growing things of the earth, among which *she* had grown, being the child of the harvest-goddess. Perhaps the treatment of the idea is too slight; but one or two things please me about it, namely, having Demeter silent throughout, and letting the little brook — the last one to fail — voice *her* sorrow. And indeed, it is so hard to be pleased with anything — while the ideal is in sight. Please do not try to make time for it, but put it aside, and sometime, any time, give it a moment and no more; else I shall feel that you must repent your kindly encouragement.

Before I forget it, I must tell you a little coincidence. You will probably not remember that Mrs. Deland once showed you a sonnet, 'Dumb Singers,' which, she said, had been written by a girl fifteen years old. But she *did* so, and you liked the sonnet, I believe, but thought that the girl must have heard the idea expressed elsewhere. I was that girl (as they say in the third act). *I* killed Cock Robin! Mrs. Prescott (whose 'November Prairie' was in the 'Atlantic' some time ago) showed the sonnet to Mrs. Deland. I remember that, at the time, the above glimmering of commendation made me happy, because, you see, *I* knew that I had not seen the idea anywhere else; but I certainly did not expect to be able to tell you so — some day.

I cannot tell you how much I thank you for your gift of consideration and advice.

Always gratefully yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
April 25, 1894

O DEAR MR. SCUDDER!

Will you help me, when you are at leisure, to accomplish a little poetical house-cleaning? (The poetry of it does not extend to the metaphor.)

For I am very much at work, and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of asking your advice about one or two — two or three — 'things.' I have to mention them now, but you need not read the following remarks until the moments of leisure come. So — *au revoir!*

The Remarks

Here is a last year's sonnet, sir (I speak as one displaying the contents of a pedler's sack) and it has this for its condemnation — that it appears to be about Spring. And so it is — in a way.

And here is 'The Song-Maker,' whom you have seen before; but I want to ask you if the last three lines seem commonplace once more. I wanted my 'Song-Maker' — who is supposed to be *naïvely* unacquainted with sorrow, for some reason — to make this pilgrimage in search of those he might cheer a little with his pipings; and in this way, it seemed to me that the last lines said about what I meant. Still, as I want the thing to be as good as I can make it, I won't give it up.

Thirdly and lastly; — here is a Thing called 'Dreams.' People like it, but they say that they haven't the faintest idea what it means — which disconcerts me. Apparently the title had no connection for them.

But I do truly want to make clear the — to me — very

simple meaning of the poem; — the human grief of the dreamer, in the midst of world-gifts — and the breathing reality of the dream, more precious than all the *material* possessions about her.

Why I made her a girl I don't know, and why she is a Little Singer and not a Big Singer I don't know. But I just saw the picture whole, as it is, and so I had to write it. I know that it is queer; please accept my apologies. But it is rather dear to me — for some reason or other — perhaps because I happened to hit a truth in it; and I want to make it worthy of that, if I can.

The air seems full of striving in these days; does it not? I laughed, the other evening during the rain; the wind drove it hither and thither so; and I said, 'A strange spring — this! Not a song could live in such a storm. And yet — as if I had heard a little rush of wings — I was aware that on the instant three or four little songs flew into my mind — for shelter, maybe; — and there they are now; — only one cannot tell when they will sing.

Yours as ever

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

April, 1894. Hurried in town to the 'Atlantic' office to see Mr. Scudder. I balanced on the threshold of the outer room for three minutes before I could knock.

Silly enough!

And then I knocked and went in and saw Mr. S. and had a cordial welcome. . . . We had a charming talk, purely personal, all about people and Florida and teaching . . . and then he invited me to accompany him to a meeting of the Folk-Lore Society at Cambridge and said that his wife wishes me to stay overnight at her house. And I accept with glee . . . I think he must like me. But I feel as if I should return in a pumpkin drawn by mice.

. . . I found Mr. Scudder in the library where we sat down and talked and talked of many things and, oh, what an adorable book-y room it was — and, oh, what adorable things he showed me — photographs of several writers,

the latest books — a bas-relief or two. And soon Mrs. Scudder came home, charming and simply cordial.

. . . We started for the Childs' soon after. When we were all seated in the parlors, Professor Child[1] came in and busied himself over his papers . . . he is the most odd and delightful personality. He is a very short man and has a face that would look old but for the blue, child-like eyes that he seldom raises; — but his hair is reddish and tightly, brightly, illogically curly — it crinkles and kinks and curly-ques all over his head. And how he read those ballads! He scarcely glanced at us once, he did not raise his voice, but there was a lovable quaintness and an indescribable charm about his way of reading them that simply delighted every one.

. . . Once he almost sang — it was delicious and as *naïve* as his curly hair and young eyes. . . . I felt all the time that his love for the ballad was so deep, so shy, and so jealous, that he hated to read them before a society of young people who would only half appreciate them.

. . . He looked at me with a kind of wistful keenness over his glasses and said — 'Do you really like them?' After I had reassured him, he went on confidentially, 'I had such a great mortification some time ago. This niece of mine whom I have mentioned as having committed to memory the entire play of "Hamlet," this niece had read Homer with me, and Chaucer, and many of the early English Poets. One day she turned from one of them and said to me, "What does it all amount to?"' He looked at me sadly and went on speaking about the general lack of interest in things high and lovely, and I grew to love that dear and lonely old man. . . . He asked me what I had read in this direction and actually said that he would lend me a volume of folk-songs (from the modern Greek) from the Harvard Library.

. . . I went in town with Mr. Scudder, and then came the most delightful talk of all. We discussed Rossetti and several others, spoke of methods of studying verse struc-

[1] Professor F. J. Child, of Harvard University.

ture, and then he told me about his correspondence with Anderson, and since I asked dozens of questions he told me all about the dinner that Dante Rossetti gave him years ago, and how he walked home with Swinburne.

. . . When I appeared at the Athenæum with my valise and this story, A. F. B. was overcome. We laughed for fifteen minutes. And I am delighted to say that A. F. B. has a short story accepted by the 'New England Magazine' and A. F. B. has met T. W. Higginson.

April, 1894. The return of the fifteenth MS. I consult purse. $1.70. Wealth! I must pay car-fares . . . stamps? A few more I must have.

April, 1894. Return of the sixteenth. Two more. I wish they would hurry up, so that I can send them out again.

May, 1894. I want some fun, some fun, and there is none to be had; good times I have, reading. But, oh! I want young people and gaiety and something droll. And I don't want to be twenty. I have had so little young fun. I go in town full of the May feeling, wanting to laugh and talk, and there is nobody at all to laugh and talk with; and I just have to sit and read all by myself, and I can't always do that in comfort; and then I come home again and feel like crying out of sheer caged-up youth. I am in a positive fever of useless disquiet and grief now. The sky is so blue and the trees are budding — and I want somebody to

PLAY WITH!

May, 1894. Well, Mr. Scudder likes 'Dreams,' anyway. And his last letter was one of undiluted praise; it made me very happy. For he evidently thinks that I write poetry, and it feels queer — this consciousness that you may be a Poet, a real Poet.

This I believe; no one ever longed for poethood if not I.

And this, too, I believe: it will be mine some day.

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
May 4, 1894

O DEAR MR. SCUDDER!

Your kind letter has just raised me out of the depths! I am *so* glad that you like 'Dreams'; and your criticism of those two lines was so welcome and helpful. Indeed, I thank you sincerely.

'May Morning' *was* a little piece of me; almost all of the things I write are. I am rather ashamed to say it, because people insist that women are *always* subjective. I don't see how you can help writing out of yourself, though, if you write truthfully, and cannot, as yet, indulge in epics.

Oh, and thank you for suggesting that I should string some little songs together for 'The Song-Maker'; it set my mind humming like a cricket at once.

I have not read Miss Rossetti's 'Goblin Market,' I am sorry to say, but I will.

For some reason I have been reading 'King Lear,' and 'King Lear,' and again 'King Lear.' It is a droll fact that one never *can* get rid of that man, Mr. W. Shakespeare, try as one may.

Now you might not know it, but I have succeeded in coaxing myself by the 'Atlantic Monthly's' lair several times of late; I was afraid that I should interrupt your work if I stopped for a moment.

I came very near asking you to help me decipher a charming little note from Mr. Child (accompanying the book of Folk Songs). I took the charm as a matter of course, and bent all my energies toward mastering the neat little cipher. After protracted efforts on the part of the whole family, we succeeded in making it out, all but three words, which seem, barring the signature, to be the most important. However —! The book is delectable and it was altogether kind of Mr. Child to remember it.

Thanking you once more very, very much for the happiness your words of approval gave me, I am, as ever

Yours sincerely

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

May, 1894. Yesterday evening my mind began to glimmer: . . . this state of glimmering is my normal one. But it comes upon me suddenly and deeply.

Everything becomes suddenly significant. Almost every word I read takes root in my mind — and grows. Everything I see *tells me something*. I write this because I have been asked off and on how rhymes come to me. And this is one way.

Of course, they come in different ways. Some simply face you suddenly — whole and alive. And some expand when you begin to write them. And some come so mysteriously that you have not an idea as to their source. 'The Woman of Three Sorrows,' for instance, woke me up one night. I had never thought of it before.

Many take a long time to grow after they have taken root. . . . 'Fate,' for instance, was outlined in my mind entirely, and there it stayed for over a year before I wrote it. *I was aware* of 'The Weavers,' as of a presence, weeks before it was written. Of the 'glimmer mood' 'The Shepherd Girl' is the truest type. It was in just such a mood, but without an idea in my mind, that I sat down to read a little while, early that evening, before I dressed for an Ashmont dance.

I read a little poem called 'November,' and as usual, since I liked it, every word appealed to me with a peculiar significance. I reached the line

'And call the wet sheep in'

and the word 'sheep' took root in my mind.

'Oho!' said I, 'sheep, sheep — I have something to say about sheep, myself.'

And so I had, by that time. And I began to write 'The Shepherd Girl.'

Oh, yes, this 'glimmer mood' is queer, but it is almost always mine. Perhaps it is that that wears me out so — it tires you sometimes, when you cannot help seeing meanings and meanings looking out at you from all things. . . . One's whole atmosphere — spiritual, mental, physical —

becomes so sensitive: — everything appeals to one; unheard sounds reach one; intangible messages penetrate one; not a leaf but speaks — not a wind but seems to blow around the world — crying the World Story: words take on a new glory and music and color. And then in the cool dark of one's mind, these thousand impressions, these hundred thoughts — these living things — are growing — growing.

May, 1894. The elm trees were wetly green and their trunks looked very black. And sparrows were puffing themselves up and hopping about on the damp walks.

It may be unconventional to stop short whenever you see a sparrow and whistle to it softly. I don't care. It makes no difference to me. I cannot get by a sparrow.

May, 1894. Return of the twenty-third. Wrote a thing called 'Horizon' — was much impressed by the subtlety of the idea and did my best to work it out.

Am now convinced that the idea is successfully subtle; it would be apparent to no one, saving myself, with a telescope.

So it appears now. However, I've only tried it on one person.

May, 1894. Life has seemed very strange since I came home. All that old glory, and vitality, and inspiration are lacking and the days are even unreasonably long.

I detest ill-tempered people too. And I have never been in the habit of being cross at all.

This morning I felt merry. But I went in town to the Athenæum and read, and I called at the 'A. M.' office and Mr. Scudder was out, and I saw not a soul I knew, and I went to Bates Hall and came home again.

Just as usual.

All alone.

May, 1894. Monday I hope to buy fifty two-cent stamps. . . . Yes, Monday brings good news. Lo, a letter from Mr. Dresser saying that he has a check for my 'Two Singers.' I go in town about it and find the 'Youth's Companion' has taken them and the check is *twenty dol-*

lars! . . . I went downtown and . . . brought away Mrs. Deland's 'Florida Days' for Mamma, a little volume of Victor Hugo's poems and 'Vesty of the Basin' for Marion — and a psalm book for my Poet's Corner and Lamb's Edition of 'Specimens from Old British Dramatic Poets.'

Oh, dear — day after to-morrow I shall have to be twenty!

May, 1894. Have sent out fourteen MSS.

May, 1894. It is at once delightful and terrifying, this endless accumulation of new suggestions that comes with the reading of a new book.

June, 1894. I do believe that I must combat this tendency to be what people call 'obscure' if I ever wish to be read.

How they are obscure I don't see: the language is certainly simple — the thought is the thought and cannot be changed for another.

One must, then, think thoughts that have more common vital interest.

And how is it that one thinks them? One must come into closer relationship with people and things.

So it all resolves itself into the old drawback of loneliness — not merely that — but literal solitude.

It isn't just my bad habit of neglecting calls; it's just the fact that at present, for one reason and another, I see almost no one who has an interest in people and things.

Then one should associate with uncongenial people; so I do: that is to say, I meet my acquaintances as other people do. They tell me that So and So is dead and talk about the particulars of So and So's illness and death; they ask me if I had a good time in the South, and tell me what a winter it was and just how late they put on their spring clothes, and they say that they took cold last week, but that they hope to throw the cold off with aconite and belladonna. Of course, there are a few people who are not like this, but we seldom see them. We cannot meet anybody new — because we don't go anywhere.

June, 1894. I am defiant. I am bound that I will find

some closer relationship with Life than that I have had hitherto. I will not be lonely. It has not, I think truly, been my fault — this loneliness of the past — and present. But if it is going to make my voice a far-away sound, if it is going to throw me upon my far-off dream resources, so that I shall seem an incomprehensible thing — I will dig, break stone — sweep streets, before I give myself up to it for life.

Return of the twenty-fifth MS.

Now for the return of the fourteen I sent out a few days ago. One is in, already.

June, 1894. Anyway, by 'squinching' now I shall have a little money next winter and I may go to one or two concerts and *sit down*. When somebody takes me to a concert, and *I sit down*, I always have the added pleasure that results from doing a thing forbidden.

I know that the seat is paid for and that no one will dispute my right to it — but I feel all the time that I *ought* to be standing up against the wall with the others, my kith and kin of just-too-short-humanity.

'Royalty,' which was accepted last fall, has been printed sooner than I thought and so my check for it arrived. After prolonged meditation and self-examination, etc., I decided that I would spend the check and buy a Webster's New International Unabridged Dictionary.

Which I did!

June, 1894. I am dreadfully ashamed of myself. I have been thinking of such foolish things in such a foolish way, of late.

I am not in the least beautiful, excepting once in a while when I feel very radiant and happy. I am always odd-looking; and frequently so homely that it makes me ache to look at myself.

But simply because (since my hat and gown are becoming) I have felt myself continually looked at and beamed upon in town lately, I have been thinking and thinking about it.

And I am afraid that I am full of vanity; not the vanity

that is content with itself, thinks itself lovely, but the vanity that longs for beauty all day and dreams of it and thinks how nice incense is.

Indeed, oftentimes when I have felt plainest people have seemed to find a something about me that held their attention.

And the worst of it is that I have begun to be aware of this sometimes when I have nothing better to think of: — and it pleases me.

One ought to be pleased, of course.

But lately I have thought of it in connection with foolish things and I hate myself for it. So I confessed it all to myself last night and thought how much I seem to have degenerated in this way since I came home, and felt very wretched. But by and by it occurred to me that perhaps it was a passing tendency, and that since the real I was distressed about it, she would overcome it.

But you must remember something, J. P., and this is it.

You have always longed to have your life symmetrical — a full and radiant expression of the trinity of existence — soul, mind, body. That you should long for physical beauty is not wrong, but right.

The wrong is in forgetting the other two greater elements in this: the wrong is in delighting in beauty from the world standpoint.

Remember: you would be a Singer. Your soul sings, your mind must sing; your body must sing.

If you are to have a little physical beauty, such as it is, remember that it will be just a natural outcome — a natural gift; it will be just the little voice of harmony and striving after beauty that your physical being has: it is the *singing* of *your body*.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
June 6, 1894

MY DEAR ABBIE:

Out of the depths of a troubled spirit will I open thee a 'Lamentation.'

For me — 'Youth's Companion' took a thing of mine (by means of the Scribe yt hath hys lair in Copley Square) and paid me well for it. Other than that, good fortune have I none. I have spent all that I have for wearing apparel and for stamps. Numerous hard knocks have my hopes received from many happenings. In short, I feel thin and Chattertonesque. People think that I have been astonishingly 'successful' this year; but I have been looking over my record of MSS. sent out and returned, and since September 27th, *'93*, I have had *104* MSS. returned. What say you? (I don't mean, of course, that there were *104 poems* sent out, for of course I've tried each several times; but *104 refusals*.)

And the madding crowd thinks that we young things know nothing about work! I say unto you that I, myself, know not a little about work, but a great deal. Yea, that say I.

And now, in these times, O Abbie Gale, my heart is so heavy that I wonder at the mendacity of Pierce's scales, which assert that I am but ninety-five pounds sterling. I wonder, yes, I do.

As for the fête at the Young Men's Seminary of Harvard, I shall be there with my sister. We have two invites. Now one of them is from Mr. H. C. Quinby, and prithee write and tell me whether or no your mother is going there with you — of course she is. If so, we would like to plan to meet you somewhere and beg you to take us under your chaperonage, because Mamma did not have an invitation from H. C. Q., and we can't go unchaperoned. Saints grant that it rain not and blow not. But it will. See if it does not. There will be a 'line'-storm not ever entered

before in the programme of the Zodiac; there will be a freak of nature in the way of an earthquake and snow; there will be a Johnstown flood, and northern lights. But 'cheer up,' as people of deep thought are always saying.

Yours pessimistically

J. P. P.

Rustica Poeta (???—!)

P.S. My last sheet of paper. Hence the adornment on the last page.[1] 'But what a touching significance breathes from these simple words, among the latest that the feeble hand of young Preston traced on the quavering blank of note-paper!' *

*From the *Life and Letters of J. Preston Peabody*, Pub. Houghton, Mifflin Co. and Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly (?). Half calf. 9 vols. $60, reduced from $180 on account of slight damage by fire.

June, 1894. Here's a twinkling possibility! Harriet Rice wants me to write (for Dr. Dunton) one of a series of little educational books for children, wishes me to meet her and talk about it.

If I get the work, I shall be assured of instant publication and advertising and I shall have one fourth of the proceeds.

This wakes me up!

If I can only do it! And do it *well!* If I could only make a dear little, clear little, book fresh and in purest English — and symmetrical in its small way. Oh, I must, I must. Wouldn't it be heavenly? And the money, too!

June 15, 1894. 'Youth's Companion' took another poem. 'Independent' has accepted 'One passes in the Dark.'

And winter comes: and little J. P., who has been unreasonably talking about the 'Season' and the 'wonderful dramatic and musical year it is going to be,' counts her money and walks past the halls and past the theatres,

[1] The 'last page' had evidently been started as a first page for a previous letter. It reads: '26 King Street, Dorchester. To the Editor of the Chap-Book.'

oddly enough — and reads and writes and looks at the criticisms in the 'Transcript' and beams upon visions of the *next* year then — the little idiot.

But oh, it is good to have checks; and I have been very fortunate lately.

June, 1894. Above all things this makes me feel sorry: — a face that shows no modelling of the soul at all. One wants to say in one's prayers — 'And help all those who are in sorrow and trouble; and help all those who have not *known* sorrow.'

June, 1894. Well, wonders will never cease. There's a decided probability that I shall go to Harvard — I mean Radcliffe, for special courses in English next season. Miss C——, the dear, wrote to that philanthropic man about me and she says that I must go to see him with her. She thinks that he would like to give me these courses at college. He has sent a great many young people to college, so they say. Blessings on him!

June, 1894. Oh, how the reading of even such a well-known poet-life[1] blows into brighter flames again the old, never-resting torment of song-striving!

It is a wonder sometimes to me — how this thing ever came into my life.

No one called it, no one fostered it. It didn't come. It was there. I did not aspire to it. It was in me. It had to grow. It burned me; and I had to suffer. Some day — some day, some day — I must attain.

This must be what always makes me feel so old, beside boys older than I — twenty-two and three and four: — boys who are earnest and practical and have seen ten times as much of life as I.

But I am always conscious of this awakened longing for unreachable things — because it has been with me ever since I could read and write and before.

July, 1894. Miss Cushing tells me that Mr. Murdoch called (about me) on Mr. Scudder and that dear Mr. S. went to see *her* about this Radcliffe plan.

[1] Shelley.

He asked many questions about us. . . . He said that he was most anxious for me to take the right courses — and *does not want* me to undertake any *training in English!* This dazed me — Behold Mr. S. wants me to go on with my Greek, read the tragedies, study Italian, and take up some art work, Harmony if I wish. He wants my writing to be let severely alone. . . . He says that my literary faults are such as will soon work themselves off . . . he thinks that the cultivation of this taste of mine will be best accomplished by the opening of my mind to other channels, and according to his delightful theory the study of Greek literature, Italian, history, and music will bring me stores of breadth and color and symmetry which will prove of deeper value to me than any conventional drill in writing conventional prose. Bless him! . . . It is lovely of him to take such an interest in it.

July, 1894. Mr. M. called this morning. He wishes to be 'of help' to me. It is decided. I am to be a 'Special' at college. . . .

I wanted much to find out whether or no my books were to be included.

They are — oh, joy!

Sweetness and light, I shall have the books for my own.

From a letter from H. E. Scudder

Please, my good little poet, do not fall in love with words. One wan smile in a lifetime is enough.

Will you suffer this Poor Old Prosaic Gentleman to caution you just a little against making poets themselves too much the theme of your verse? I have now read a number of your poems and I hope to read many more, but I had a tolerably distinct impression that the Singer occupies much of your attention.

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
July 6, 1894

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

Indeed, I was sorry not to see you when I called, and I should have written to tell you so, had I not fallen ill with that utterly useless 'grip.' I shall begin my pilgrimages to the Athenæum soon again, however, and then I am going to tell you how much I enjoyed your 'Goblin Market,' and how much obliged I am for your 'malignant' criticisms.

Yes, I have said a great deal about singers — too much, perhaps. But I have grown to speak of all *artists* as singers, simply because the word 'singer' is such a simple way of designating one who expresses something. It is narrow, though, very likely, and I am in danger of talking too much about it — simply because the ideal is the deepest thing in my life as yet.

Yours as ever
JOSEPHINE PEABODY

July, 1894. We have had one or two funny conversations; on Books, people, physiognomy, America, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, war and peace, Books, the American Navy, Books, the strikes, Books, tortures during the Middle Ages, murders, systems of execution, surgery, anæsthetics, Books, French people, Russian novels, amateur philosophy, American history, the Meigs Bill, Books.

Oddly enough, whenever I talk to any man, who is nice and sincere, no matter what topic we start with, we always find ourselves talking about the existence of God. . . . And it all came about so naturally, so unavoidably; and we felt so unabashed and simple about it, and the few words gave each of us such a warm feeling of utter comfortableness, I know — and an unspoken love and enthusiasm for those of our generation and our country and for each other's futures.

Oh, you older people know very little about typical youth.

July, 1894. And above all things, whatever comes — may I grow — and sing.

August, 1894. Such days stand out in my memory above all others. They are unforgettable. Even now — every day almost, I live over again that moment, last winter, in the moonlit dark and stillness, when a moth flew against my face — and the infinite thought of infinity — unmeasured life and beauty — came to me with strange undying pain, the pang of a central happiness, the very white heat of understanding. I think, too, of the frenzy that possessed me — those clear, perfect mornings, when the sky was pitilessly blue and the long moss stirred in the winds and the thousand-voiced grass seemed a-thrill with crickets and the water was full of stars a-dance.

Nothing helped but a pull over the lake against the wind, with all one's strength, till the blowing of ruffled hair across one's eyes, the purring of the waves against the rudder, the glow of conscious physical effort, made me laugh aloud with delight.

Ah —! To grow — to sing:

'I have
Immortal longings in me.'

September, 1894. . . . Got into a tangle over something about 'a tired little zithern.' I hardly dare look at it, just yet — it is so rough.

But I haven't written anything for a long time.

And it is joy even to croak.

September, 1894. Mankind, it seems, is to be treated with all the affectionate tenderness of a mother towards a naughty child.

'Lovely woman' lives apparently to be his inspiration, salvation, guide, prop, crutches, prize.

The hopelessness of it is, that I suppose no man, no young man, ever understood or imagined the loathing, contemptuous pity, physical, spiritual, and mental re-

pulsion that the account of his youthful 'wild oats' gives a girl acquaintance.

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
September 7, 1894

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

. . . Soon we shall have such clear, great-winged days; and the city noises will be veiled in snow; and the florists' windows will give one glimpses of radiant color behind frost; and people who go to Music Hall to buy tickets will hear maddening bits of the rehearsals upstairs; and people of my age will walk in, Friday afternoons, and buy apotheosis for twenty-five cents.

This is *not* an attempted pastel in prose — though, from its irrelevant tone and the hideous change of key in the last line, it might be — a pastel — by some people.

Oh, soon enough, though, I shall be casting MSS. upon the waters, whence they will return to me — after many days.

If you have gleaned any news at all from this chatter, I shall be glad.

Remember me, please, to Mrs. Scudder, and to your daughter, and thank yourself from me for your own kindly interest.

Yours sincerely
JOSEPHINE PEABODY

September, 1894. Every year the Out of Doors grows more poignantly dear to me. It brings utter peace to some people — not to me — I always feel something immortal trying to break loose, at such times —

November, 1894. A celestial pay-day, yesterday. Yes — I have waited long for it and it came at last.

The old celestial pay-day that I know so well, not an unexpected material gift, but a great returning tide of gladness, hope, assurance, new vision. I was so happy

. . . that the tears kept filling my eyes against my will.

It is a wonderful thing, how the tide comes in.

December, 1894. If there is anything that makes me feel helplessly unhappy and small it is to see a bird hurt.

And Penny the gray kitten . . . died a long time ago, too — almost two months. And I don't see why I should feel so sorry.

But I am always picturing the little kitten sitting upright on the floor, as he used — his tail curled about him daintily, and going to sleep — bolt upright — and actually *swaying* a little, from side to side, in his sleep — his head drooping, like a bird's, back from his white little shirt-front. A funnier little sight you couldn't see than that little kitten, going to sleep while he still sat up!

December, 1894. Of late everything seems to leave a dint in my mind — everything lovely. One always has high-tides; — and often to me perception of the beautiful amounts to torment; but now it keeps me in a state of happy hurted-ness all day long.

December, 1894. Most days end with headaches, I don't know why, except that I am so bursting with good spirits and eagerness every morning, and having them always bottled up, having no one to speak to, practically, no one to talk to about all my work, my plans, *our* work, *our* plans, *our* opinions, having all my youth shut up, shut up — imprisoned — makes me feel hopelessly bewildered, sometimes, I'm ashamed to say.

I have to talk aloud to myself for company, to my guardian angel . . . to all the heavenly host.

Oh — all ye ten thousand times ten thousand — why under the heavens, why, for Christian charity's sake, couldn't one of you just fly down and sit here a while and talk to me?

To-morrow morning I shall be light and happy again; — that eternal chirper that chirps away in my heart every morning doesn't know a thing, but it is always hopeful.

'It cannot last forever,' chirps the thing.

No, it cannot last forever.

But it can last till all my short youth is gone — gone utterly; it can wither my mind, make me dumb, narrow my path; dim my vision; cut down my interests; turn my mind even more upon itself; make even more of an egoist of me; destroy me.

And for this once, I *must* speak of it.

This daily morning exultation — this evening rebellion and despondency — is taking all the life out of me again — all. And I have struggled against circumstances very long, very long indeed.

I can see no way out.

I am a small thing, an unimportant thing, but I am a *live* thing. I would rather not die in a cage.

If God would send me but a sparrow for company.

December, 1894. Tired.

I tried to amuse myself by jotting down the metrical schemes of many of my old rhymes — to see what they were, — for I never knew even the names of various feet.

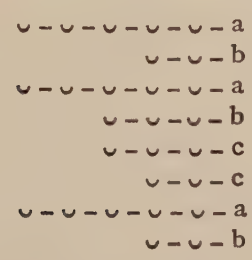
I knew something of forms by wholes, but only from observation. 'Iambic pentameter' would have been an astonishment to my ears, even after I had written fifteen or sixteen sonnets.

I found an odd miscellany of forms — the majority iambic; a number of variations on iambic tetrameter among early things — later ones pentameter, and a number of little experiments that weren't bad — the bare scheme, I mean.

For instance, the suggestion of low tide in 'Low Tide' 1889 —

Later work was more complicated, naturally, and most of it better.

A few little shapes, I like.



Trochaic things were less frequent, but I was surprised to find a number of dactylic specimens; — and the measure seems to give them a little rush and impetuosity that accounts for anything pleasant about them.

A motley collection of metres and rhymes, but I'm glad of it. Bad as many of them are, they show no tendency to imitate, as far as I can see; and some of the shapes, as I have to call them — some of the little instruments themselves — are not a bit bad: only the words written for them.

That is odd, and yet it gives me hopes.

For often, obviously, the form, as a mere scheme of measure and rhyme, seems to me, even now, fresh and melodious — but the words were clumsily managed.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

50 WENDELL STREET, CAMBRIDGE
December 14, 1894

MY DEAR ABBIE:

. . . I am delighted that *you* have been doing even that little scribulous work. I, my child, have done nothing, absolutely nothing.

I have (what seems to me) a very good plot for

The Play

all worked out, and arranged in every detail for its body and its clothes. But I shall have to look up endless things about the period, etc., before I dare sail in.

My last verses were enough to make me tear my hair:

in short, the Muses have left me, bag and baggage. I am waiting hopefully for that leisure day when you will act as mediator and advocate, and tell them that, at least, I *meant* well.

But do you know, I begin to think that we, in our arrogant youthful confidence in overflowing ideas, have been something *too* dependent on — inspiration (?) — something too — lazy, in fact. Of course, the best work is absolutely spontaneous. But, for my own part, I know that I have always taken my responsibilities too irresponsibly. I have *never* 'tried' to write anything. If I did not happen to be compelled, there and then — absolutely dragged by the hair of my head — to set forth an imperative idea, I whistled and walked off.

Youthful scorn of effort is a fine thing. You and I adore it (don't we?), especially because you and I both have it — and because you and I especially adore You and Me. *N'est-ce pas?*

Forgive me for including you in this diatribe. (I'm so impatient with myself that I grasp hopefully at any possible fellow-sinner.)

But, little by little, I think that I have grown to feel too secure in the potential Idea; too much the mistress of Spontaneous Inspiration (small size). And this long silence is a delicate proof of the attention of Fate. I have been gently *let down* a few rods. I begin to see that one can't bury one's little talent in a napkin and expect it to sprout forth with a hollyhock when one whistles and says, 'Asmodeus, appear!' Seriously, our small talent needs to be un-buried and 'shined up' a bit. I am going to shine up mine, I think, I hope — even if I have to put my verses on crutches and count their every footstep — (eh? I'm geeting involved). Mixed metaphors to begin with! I shall probably even be reduced to the — ai! — sky — high — dry — fie! process.

'Tis well.

I sit among the ashes.

But I hope to rise again, Phyllis, yea (let me indulge you

with another flower of wit, such as Fate ironically crowds my brain with, now, in the time of our tribulation) — I hope to ape the phœnix!

Yours J. P. P.

January, 1895. Thank Heaven, I have written a wee bit. The evening of the 27th I heard a premonitory croak, so I sat up and wrote about the most outrageous doggerel any one ever heard. . . . I shall keep it as a reminder of the depth to which a moderately intelligent person can descend. Next evening I wrote the planet-thing, wherein a large idea is treated in a small and inadequate manner, but it shows a vast stride from the first painful hurdy-gurdy effort.

The evening after that I wrote a *Wanderlied* which rather pleases me, because it was at least utterly spontaneous, and the measure is a pretty one and the thing rippled off easily: but still it's literal in a disagreeable way.

May such a deadly silence never come again! It has been abject misery.

January, 1895. It sometimes seems to me that if I don't find some comradeship, some smallest glimmering of fellow-feeling, I shall go insane. But of course that is absurd and egoistic and highly exaggerated. . . . I'm not complaining of being misunderstood — it isn't that. I don't yearn for appreciation: I see keenly how little there is in me to be appreciated.

It is only the bare childish want of everyday comradeship. 'I want Somebody to Play with!'

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
January 6, 1895

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

I found your note awaiting me, after the Symphony, Thursday evening, and you don't know how glad I was to have it.

I have been so very lonely for many weeks, because I have seen but few people, and also because I haven't had a chance to write anything presentable. I have been longing for an opportunity to talk, talk, talk to somebody; and, as that opportunity has seldom appeared, I have talked to myself, until the Murray family — and passers-by in the street — have begun to take me for a harmless lunatic.

As for my small verses, good sir, I felt so keenly the fact that I must have bored you with them, last spring, that I have heroically withstood the temptation to send you them, until now. 'Sunset' is the only one published since spring which you have not seen first. '*So now!*'

Did I tell you that, after all, I had to give up the plan of writing that little mythological story-book? Illness, in the summer, delayed it till fall, you will remember; unexpected difficulties with the Board postponed it then; the extra half-course demanded by that same Board has made it an impossibility, since I prefer assimilation rather than cramming. It is rather a pity; yet I should probably have done it ill, and no money could ever have sweetened such a failure for me, even supposing it had brought money!

I have met the girls you mentioned, and find them all delightful. It is too bad that I do not see them oftener — but we always seem to be hurrying in opposite directions.

As for college work, itself, after the first period of disenchantment, I found it altogether interesting. Greek is an exception; the things we have been reading have become almost a bore, under the present *régime*. The class is stupid, and the instructor — I can picture him carving a phœnix, with conscientious precision, and remarking, 'Wings are unimportant, but here is a drumstick, my dears.' Now don't question my ornithology, for you don't know a bit more about phœnixes than I do.

Mr. Grandgent and Italian I are all that they should be, and more.

My English instructors are rather satisfactory, both of them, but quite inaccessible, and that annoys me, because I want so much to talk about It to them, since they are (secretly) enthusiastic about their work.

It is all very droll. I had imagined that college-folk enjoyed a certain comradeship, a certain exhilaration resulting from mental friction and the interchange of ideas. But behold, college seems to be just a grown-up *school;* and so mamma's good little son Preston wanders about, armed with a small idea which he longs to share with somebody — like a child with a stick of candy, who invites some one to come and play with him: — 'Have a bite?'

I frequently want to argue a bit with my instructors, but they are so young that they seem to regard all the students as so many 'maiden huntresses,' whom it is expedient to avoid; moreover, I dislike to charge at their desks, with 'O Mr. Gates!' or 'O Mr. Baker!' at the close of a lecture, as many do.

I seem to have enlarged upon this topic to a dismal extent, but you must blame the weather, which is truly disheartening.

I'm afraid that you will have to read two or three things of mine this week, because I'm going to send them to you, willy-nilly. One's a *Wanderlied*, and the other is all about planets, so be prepared for two large ideas, inadequately treated.

Do you know, if you ever should chance upon the time when you could judge of the Murrays' little parlor, and the exterior of their samovar (which I don't know how to manage), I should like to bring down my old rhyme-book, and make you laugh over some early and highly tragic sonnets. (They were written when I was thirteen and fourteen, and they are insanely funny — which was not at all my intention at the time.)

I unearthed, the other day, a prehistoric poem about a kitten, which I am proud of, because it shows such faithful study from life. The last verse goes:

'With a soft and drowsy purr,
She quickly goes to sleep,
And no one could dislike her
Who has ever had one to keep.'

(Respectfully submitted.)

Do you know, for many weeks I have been — figuratively speaking — hanging about the book-stores like a tramp, and nibbling furtively, here and there, at 'Childhood in Literature and Art' — at the daily risk of being asked to 'move on'! I brought it home in triumph yesterday afternoon, however, and I expect to have pleasant times with it, in those intervals of rest permitted me by Messieurs Paine, Bates, Grandgent, Gates, and Baker.

Until when — accept my anticipations — and kindest regards from Mamma and my sister Marion. I hope to see the 'Atlantic' Office before long, but, in default of an earlier call — here's the news!

Always sincerely yours
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

P.S. That Wagner programme set a whole vista of 'things' a-whirl in my mind. Thank you again for that evening. It was an oasis.

[1] *February*, 1895. Better this A.M. I do wish that I were stronger. I am ashamed to feel ill. Before I forget it, I want to note something that has been impressed upon me lately; that is — the exquisite healing power of music for people of such temperament when they are exhausted.

A few weeks ago, when I was at home in bed, I had such an unendurable thirst for music . . . one evening I heard M. touching her new guitar idly and the occasional mellow note was as tantalizing as a distant brook to one dying. . . . I tried to hear again mentally Ysaye's violin and the thought of it untangled my nerves. 'Quiet waters — quiet waters — quiet waters.'

Poor Saul . . . and yet, happy Saul. For David sang to him.

March, 1895. That wingèd thing!

I have been wondering whether the fourth dimension of the soul is not this — this instinctive and inevitable reach after distances. . . . Often at such moments I remember what must have been my first conscious experience of it — of the wingèd one.

We were travelling somewhere on our way home after the summer, and as I looked out of the car window (I was a very little child) there came in sight against the western sky — far off, a range of hills: I saw on them the first time that strange purple bloom, like grape bloom, that I had seen in pictures of mountains. And I feel now the sudden leap of longing with which all my consciousness, my soul, leaned, leaned, her face strained toward them, her arms flung out to reach. . . . I feel still the strange new delight of that newly seen magical distance — the beyond-beckoning, that's what it is.

And I feel it always when I see a distance. I was conscious of a tugging at my little mortal tether, and how I have tugged at it ever since! But this one especial wildness has always been with me so strong, so vital a thing that I can remember the feeling and pull it to pieces now.

April, 1895. One thing about Mr. Moody is absolutely new to me. He has a way of saying 'Tell me about it' whenever I mention anything that interests me or has held depths for me, or even when I don't mention those depths, and this unexpected *Tell me about it* is a thing that strikes great wonder through me and almost puts two tears in my eyes before I know it; so very grateful, so very new it is. For so many years I have been looking and looking for the moment when people 'were not busy'; for so many years I have been so eager to share these small experiences; — small, I know — old, I know: but each of us has to discover the world anew.

And I, catching sight of twigs and leaves afloat, the bit of carving — the stray bird — all heralds of land — land new to me — I have been so eager. And here comes some

one who says 'Tell me about it.' William Vaughn Moody. I shall not forget that soon, I think.

June, 1895.... I did see the immortal Little Boy[1] again. He came out of his study smiling downwards — somehow — and looking at me with that furtive keenness, through his glasses: there was the same suddenly-childlike eyes; there was the same illogically yellow and curly hair. I could simply have put my two arms around his neck and hugged him.

It pleased me, painfully, that he remembered so distinctly all the circumstances of our former talk... he asked about my work, too... he remembered all about our conversation and he remembered me and my address. And he wanted to see more of my work and me. And at last he took me out to see the roses. Mrs. Child, Miss Child, and Miss Norton were in the garden, and they came to meet us with 'Mr. Schofield tells us that you didn't like President Eliot's address,[2] Miss Peabody.' 'Indeed I did not,' I said. (I was furious inly over the speech.) 'Tell us about it,' they began, but Professor Child rebuked them.

'You can discuss these matters another time,' said he quaintly. 'I am going to show Miss Peabody the roses.' And he did.

Through the whole enchanted garden we went, among the narrow little walks bordered with box: and such roses!

They were burdened with long and unfamiliar names, most of them, and I can only remember the look and speech of them; the unforgettable fragrances, subtle, with the haunting subtlety of a violin-breath; the 'joyous leaves' that they uttered; and the color of them in and out of shadow — brimming with light — color that *sang*. And one variety — ahi — but it was peculiarly Rose-like. I begged him not to cut one from the bush, but he would.

[1] Professor Child.

[2] President Eliot had questioned the capacity of women for creative scholarship.

'I do not think that any one will appreciate it more,' he said simply. . . .

And he asked me to come again, and he begged me to rest and grow strong: and when he said good-bye — I almost think that he added 'My dear' — I am quite sure of it.

Ah, but it was good!

July, 1895. I went in town yesterday and the day before. Having a wee cheque I recklessly went off on a 'bat' of books.

Every spare cent of late has gone so. Hence I possess some nasty little sacrilegiously printed Italian things, Petrarch and Leopardi; and Alfred de Musset and some delectable second-hand texts — Æschylus and Sophocles — not distinctly readable as yet to me — from the library of one 'Increase Smith.' They are Leipzig editions well preserved and with edges gloriously green. I joy in them. I have one or two late volumes of verse and some jolly little pamphlets and a couple of bound volumes of 'Scribner's,' and Christina Rossetti. Motley's the only wear.

Also, whenever I have passed a stationer's, I have turned again and succumbed to the temptation of another half-pound of paper; wherefore stacks of deliciously blank sheets await me — to say nothing of a dozen easy-going pens. And I have just come home from Cambridge, from a winter and a spring of Greek and Italian and old dramatists and prosody and harmony: from a winter of unforgettable primitive loneliness and evening abysmal gloom and morning enthusiasms; from a strange new-made Spring of occasional comradeship, of several genuine 'Good Times' (things that I haven't known too much of in the world's way), of new sights and insights, new helps and new inspirations: I have met with almost unvarying kindliness and affection . . . and I have been patted on the head to excess.

My mind, as I say, is a perfect blank. And yet . . . I am aware of the long journey that I have taken this year. There is nothing so developing as being away from home — being responsible for yourself. . . .

In a way it's alarming, this consciousness of mental travel, knowing my own enormous faculty of assimilation — my inborn readiness for experience, my intuitive reach after and welcome of food in the shape of new thoughts, new sights, new people, new books — and not *new* ones merely — but new *standpoints* — new phases of and new aspects of joy, knowledge, suffering — I scare my crudely developing self.

July, 1895. An adorable note from Bishop Valentine — that is Professor Child — with Gummere's 'Book of the English Ballads.'

It is wonderful how such a note can change the day. Before it came I had felt stupid and shallow as a sawdust doll . . . I looked up from the letter and felt my room full of the waves of summer that came in at the windows: I was a somebody to whom my Bishop Valentine felt like writing such a thing, and I was happy with the new hope that such a certainty of possible lifelong youth brings one. I wish that I might tell him some time; the letter touches me so that I must transcribe it.

'Dear Miss Peabody, I sent you the ballads without a word because at the moment I was in a whirl. I do not know a prettier book in its way and the introduction is very well worth reading by anybody. All the best are there and no indifferent ones. I need not point out particulars, for I am sure of your taste, but just for sympathy I may note "The Wife of Usher's Well," a fragment, but one of the best bits of poetry in all the great world of poetry.

'The roses are gone, a lovely generation passing in a short month. I always mourn for them and am always saying the beautiful lines which everybody knows but nothing can stale.

Mais elle était du monde
Où les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin.
Et rose, elle a reçu, ce que vivent les roses
L'espace d'un matin.

These verses were written almost three hundred years ago by a man who had just lost a daughter, to another man who had undergone the same affliction, and have been recalled hundreds of times upon like occasion. They always move me and partly because I grieve for the roses as well as for the young creatures who live again. If I were not afraid and in danger of being sentimental (but that is always a relative matter, for true feeling may be sentimental to those who do not see things the same way), I could call to mind individual roses which died long ago.

'Ever yours faithfully

'F. G. CHILD.'

July, 1895. We are always self-conscious before our Ains; the enormous weight of what they Know-Us-to-Be rather crushes possibilities. . . . But — and now I'm speaking of myself — once remove me from my own home — make me feel myself alone and an individual with the right to blunder my own blunders; — and let there be at hand somebody congenial; and give us two minutes of preliminary talk about nothings; and behold, in an alarmingly short space of time I am talking with a directness and a candor that makes me lose my sense of identity. And there is such unspeakable joy in this outspokenness and simplicity that I bid good-bye to the ground and go bobbing away in my balloon, in the free air; ahài — and I tip this way and that among the birds and look down on the chimneys and get to see the curve of the earth and the upcoming sails on the brink; and I go faster and faster; I brush against celestial bodies and get hooked on a comet and stir star-dust.

And by and by there is a shooting star in the way and a stern bit of wingèd iron hits my balloon and — puff! — and down I go: — and I am tangled up in a tree somewhere in Timbuctoo — no — Cambridge; — no — it isn't a tree, it's Mrs. Murray's parlor — it's the doorstep — and I am Josephine Preston Peabody, aged twenty or twenty-one — a grown-up young lady talking to —

What have I been talking to?

I have been simply talking across to another disembodied soul as if I trusted it — as if I loved it. I have even been talking about God, perhaps. And I am I — and this soul is he, it's a man, a man of 1895.

One wakens with a start.

And I have been saying things. I have been confiding things. Not like *me* at all. Like a six-year-old child who wants somebody to play with. . . .

I am as afraid of acquaintance as a hare.

July, 1895. Buy Maeterlinck: experience 'L'Intruse' and 'Les Aveugles.' . . . Delicious to experience a new writer or so — new to yourself — and to give a radiant line the whole morning to filter through your mind and fill it with light.

Walt Whitman . . . is a revelation to me. He sets one thinking as the ground — the earth itself — does with its sweetness, its vastness, its glorification of decay, its divine *utilitarianism*. He makes me think of the tremendous economics of nature.

And I have been reading my 'Ballads' and de Musset and Maeterlinck and Leopardi. Another such day and my mother will have to pin a fold of my gown through to the sofa with a hatpin — else I shall rise and be no more seen.

. . . I do not know when I have felt my arms open wide — instantly — as they have to Leopardi. He is beautiful beyond description. And the metrical form of his things is a solace to me.

. . . Ah, it is only when one reads the best Italian, the most sensitized French, and finds the tears running down one's cheeks, because of the mere vibrating of perfect sounds across one's nerves — it is only then that one realizes what our glorious English has to contend against. To prune and prop, to water and nourish and train up a bit of verse, that it shall *sing;* to persuade yourself that it is singing: and then to have some mere modern — Ver-

laine, for instance — break your head with this little mandolin

'Amour pale, aurore future —'

'queurs musiciennes'

July, 1895. Went to see Mr. Scudder yesterday, and had a most delectable talk with that most genuine dear. It made me very happy, for he has seldom talked to me before in such a frankly work-ful way — or rather as if I were assuredly, now, a girl with her life-work plainly before her. . . . It was a whole inspiration: and I went away feeling warm and sheltered with gratitude for such helpful encouragement.

August, 1895. One thing has rather puzzled and piqued me. I have never been able to understand why — when I was a very small child, I did not feel any strenuous eagerness to learn to read. . . . I know that Mamma and Papa kept me away from books and school until I was seven years old. I knew no more than the alphabet then. Now why with my fiendishly inquiring mind — my absolute greed for knowledge, and for books (after I had learned to read) — didn't I learn by myself at the age of five, as other children have? As a matter of fact, I never tried; I did not feel the need of literature at all. . . . I remember distinctly: as long as some one read me a bit now and then, I was content. I would absorb that bit and take it with me and live on it, for many days, with the placidity of a camel in a desert. And that bit made me think of other things: I would sit for hours serenely 'reading' aloud long tales out of a book that I held upside down, without caring to puzzle out the letters I knew, even.

Apparently my mind grew upside down. My imaginative faculty woke before my receptive faculty woke and was anhungered. Never did I feel any wish to learn — any need of books, until I learned to read at Saint Mary's. Then — ye Saints! Then three readers in the first three months and afterwards — everything — everything!

Rye Beach, *July*, 1895. I was touched by the infinitude of

little lovelinesses that wait to bless you if you will only see them. Such things we passed! — Undulating pasture lands drenched with light: — and the wonderful color of them — gray greens of the girdling willows — vital greens of long grass in the wind, rippling and billowing, always at ebb and flow — green one moment, gray the next. Then the lush jade green of new grass, spring-fed; the stretch of patient marshes — some leopard-tawny and mottled; the rosy streaks of bright grasses; the sudden cool blue of a winding water that reaches away and away into the woods; the beneficent lights and shadows of orchards; the sweet-smelling, dusty road bordered with waves of grass that break into a foam of small daisies at the edges; the deep draught of color that waits for one in the old-fashioned gardens here and there about the little shabby houses, the flickering shadows of leaves, the jungle of pink and gold and yellow flowers growing together, the thousand little wings of sweet peas, the clear-blown message of color from the morning-glories, the splendid purple of the thick clematis over the fence like a king's garment. Ah, how I drank of it! Then upland again for a moment — and then a glimpse of the girdling sea — purply blue like Austrian violets. (Aie, how the round world sings!)

August, 1895. Finish 'Daphne' for the present. Skim over a bit of Ovid because he made me think of two or three more monologues. I am sorry to write so many things on the classical subjects. But nothing fascinates me more than filling out classical outlines with human material. I should like to write some things, now, about 'Phaëthon' and I want to chatter for a faun, about the contest between Pan and Apollo. It is always the unplanned that one writes, though. And so I'm doing nothing on the play while I spend my time chasing 'Daphnes.' It is odd how these tides come and go. One feels, on some days, so definitely, that one's veins are full of the blood of poetry. It throbs against one's eyeballs, and one sees all things aflame with singing color and one's self, with its little trials, and its pale insignificant griefs, becomes a

thing apart, save that it helps one to read the great trials and the great griefs of the world.

August, 1895. A Sorrow that turns at the last into an understanding and a pity.

I feel no sense of humiliation, but a sense of glory at hammering out this slow, humble knowledge from my own failures and mistakes and faults. One never learns by successes. Success is the blessed plateau that one rests upon to take breath and to look down from upon that strait and difficult path, but one does not *climb* upon a plateau.

And it is true, after all, that in that little lull after an outburst, when, so to speak, one's spiritual tears are drying on one's poor face — I always do, instinctively, begin to shape a significance out of the thing I have suffered — I *try* for the new understanding.

August, 1895. Here was I, actually I, of all people, comfortably walking into college, or say, uncomfortably walking into college, at 8 o'clock, Sept. 20th, 1894, feeling that since Mr. Murdoch had alighted from the heavens to give me the wherewithal I *must* eventually get in: feeling, on the other hand, grim and aghast at the recollection of my piecemeal Greek and my scattered and self-earned English — saying my prayers all over the library and wondering whether the heavens would smile upon my monumental cheek.

And here I pass, actually, being dragged by the hair of my head by my Angel. Moreover, the board money which I trusted would rain from the heavens, rained, eventually, in the shape of dividends from Mamma's new investments. Then to look even farther back — behold the day when I went to see Mr. Scudder — with those shabby gloves on: and think of the steady and glorious progress of that friendship and the glorious growth of my own ideal, through his kindly encouragement, most blessed of all — even more blessed than his acceptance of things — his sound affection for Art itself and his disdain of the 'salable' principle; which might, subtly, have become my ruin, bewildered and lonely as I was.

And now — behold! The other day I went to see Mr. Murdoch: and I find that, for some reason or other, he has enormous faith in me; he declares . . . that I am going to be a great woman . . . he begged me to come to him whenever I wanted anything at all, advice or money, and ask him as I would my father. 'And,' he said, 'whatever it is, you shall have it.'

And behold, what a lone mouse was I when I went to the Murrays first, that stormy evening; how shy and afraid of business principles and dimly hopeful of being liked. And what a sleek, vainglorious, bread-laden mouse did I depart, having been pampered and petted and assured that I was an angel, until I began to believe it.

I wonder if it is good for people to tell them that they are wonderful indeed, until the creatures, seeing that you are blind, begin to prank themselves out for your benefit with intent to adapt themselves to the illusion and keep you burning incense before them.

I shall try it with Hamlet.[1] I will persuade him that he is a vegetarian.

It is wonderful to me, and sometimes even painful — to be regarded so incessantly with this unbounded faith and hope. Wherever I go I am always running up against these great hopes for me that show me how very small in a way I am; yet I see how they help me. For it may be that no one is great, saving potentially: that we accomplish big things only in so much as we realize the infinity of our power in God.

Even I, at this age, feel very little, sometimes, when some one 'cannot understand how any one so young could *ever* have understood this or that,' etc., etc.

Because I remember how often I have sat down to some work — yes, even English 14 reports — feeling utterly without ideas — and saying to myself — 'This is absurd: — but I will go at it' . . . and then, before I know it — that mere helplessness of mine, fluttering on the surface of some potential knowledge, would grasp at some surface straw and save itself.

[1] The cat.

August, 1895. Went through some more rhymes, mending. One's stupidity sets one's teeth on edge. It astonishes one to see the enormous change that the substitution of a word here and there makes. I overhauled some rather antique rhymes and pulled my own hair with disgust at the commonplace epithets thereof. The years are for something if it is only to show one how to mend rhymes.

To Horace E. Scudder

MARDEN HOUSE, RYE BEACH, N.H.
August 15, 1895

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

I have been enriching my mind with silences. This adorable place is prodigal of them. I look out upon quiet corn-fields, an idly clacking wind-mill, a row of musing trees — the sea. It is not hard to be content.

Yesterday afternoon, I gathered up some papers and went away to read a bit and to mend 'Penelope.' I perched upon a broad stone wall, shaded by trees that leaned from the little churchyard. I had before me a warm meadow-land, that stretches from the distant roadside down to the rocks and the sea; and this meadow was purpled with clover. Moreover, I had been reading a bit of the Odyssey. So it was very easy to mend 'Penelope'; and I hope that you will approve of the result. You asked to see it, you know. It seems to me that the thing is stronger and clearer; — at any rate, I hope so. I have tried to suggest, in several ways, this latter voyage of Ulysses, fearing to do more, lest I should hurt the singleness of the human episode by introducing any narrative. I have thought of changing the line

'Stared mine own eyes dim,' etc.

to

'Outstared mine own eyes. So I knew him not.'

It would be better. Don't you think so?

I am so glad that you suggested 'Meadow-Grass' for

summer reading. I am not at all fond of New England stories; they depress me, as a rule. But this book was an enchantment. I hardly missed a word. 'Farmer Eli's Vacation' is a matchless little piece of work. I find the stories especially lovely because they are not self-conscious — they do not strenuously insist upon their own strong points. (In this respect, Mary Wilkins, strong as she is, irritates me beyond endurance.) Miss Brown's English, too, seems singularly lovely. I am dimly conscious, always, as I read it, of an underlying symmetry — a — but I can't express it. Only the *antennæ* of one's literary instinct feel it and are satisfied. Thank you *very much.*

I have been reading Leopardi, as usual of late, and Condivi's life of Michelangelo. I brought a volume of Carducci, also. Perhaps it was just the wrong one; for, besides the fact that I find him difficult, he seems to be terribly Latin; one misses the lovely flexibility of most Italian; one stands face to face again with that dreadful peculiarity of Latin — one knows the meaning of every word, but one can't put them together — they are as good upside down as any other way!

. . . Here's a little rhyme that I committed with great deliberation yesterday noon: — and then, good-bye, for you must be quite tired of

Yours always sincerely
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

P.S. I forgot to say that Penelope really means that 'The man's right' is his; she accepts it as an old-world truth; she is trying to justify him to herself. Don't imagine that I sympathize with her in that, though!

J. P. P.

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
August 30, 1895

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

. . . I am always having to thank you for something; am I not? I am sometimes amused at a vision of myself, armed with a list of benefits whole rods long, inquiring for you on the Day of Judgment, that I may add my accumulated testimony to that of the ten thousand times ten thousand witnesses. Perhaps it is unkind of me to begin unrolling my list now, and yet I think it is sometimes a good idea to realize when one is happy, instead of waiting till one is very old, to say, 'I was fortunate then, if I had only known it. Why did I not see how these friends were helping me to be something?'

I was thinking of this, the other day, and basking in the warm consciousness of the thousand blessings that were helping me to grow. And I realized especially what a truly *saving* influence some of my talks with you have been — in that they concerned themselves only with the most pure and vital ideal of art, when the 'salable' principle that I had heard so much of, repulsive in itself, might have worked upon me subtly to my deep hurt. Of course, you could have no sympathy with anything *but* the artistic ideal; and yet you need not have encouraged me to try and carry out some of those big plans that must have seemed very drolly big — considering me! I have thought very much of this, and I want to tell you about it, while I am thanking you for other things — among them, your goodness in writing to me when you must have been so preoccupied on account of Mr. Houghton's death. I was so sorry to learn that this misfortune occurred while you were away — perhaps with us.

Always sincerely yours
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

September, 1895. I hate, I hate, I hate to look little. It

is crushing to be continually referred to as 'little' and nobody realizes it. . . . I have just to sit down and carefully make up my mind that as long as I live I am going to look little. Then, if I were bewitching, I might resign myself a bit, although that is the last type in the world that I care for, but I gather from M—— that I am something that frightens and freezes all nineteenth-century youth. . . . And compliments that touch on such points are even worse than everyday comparisons. I simply want to kill people whom I hear inquiring who 'the little lady' or 'that sweet little lady' is. . . . It is funny that I should have to be of a type that I particularly dislike, myself.

I must get over this.

September, 1895. Elms are the most songful trees we have. I always think so when I see one alone in a level meadowland. It springs up so spontaneously, it is so straight growing; and yet it reaches out dreamful arms all ways and they muse a little and bend from the joyous one up-springing trunk. Oh, yes, they are songful.

September, 1895. What a difference newness of type makes to us in literature. It is funny that it should, but for my part I *read* a thing newly whenever I read it in a new form of print. I shall never forget the sudden revelation of the touch-able modern ever-living Shakespeare in the Rolfe edition (vulgarized by the illustrations, however) after the Great, traditional, unapproachable Shakespeare in the old Globe edition; then the blessed, live, unexplained and unillustrated Shakespeare in that adorable Temple edition. I shall not forget, either, the first edition of Keats that I ever had in my hands, an odious limp-covered 'holiday' copy with ribbons in it, which scared me away from any acquaintance with him. Yes, I never even looked into him save by accident until I hit upon that beatific little Canterbury, with pleasant-smelling paper, little as it was, companionable, white-labelled, blue, and thirty-five cents-ible. Then having read him from cover to cover and back again, I sent . . . for a full edition of him. . . .

Then Homer. What a gulf between the black volume

labelled *School Iliad* . . . its beautiful text dishonored by the proximity of well-meaning notes, and the two little volumes of the Odyssey, in poorer ink, to be sure, and with a certain German crabbedness about the text, but which confided in your own understanding and came to you with a genial simplicity. . . . Then Tennyson. I shall never forget the old copy we had when I was six or seven, and how it made me sympathize with all the puppies that howl disconsolately when they hear music. It blighted my youth, that book. . . . In New Hampshire I came across a little old green volume, though without a picture, and Tennyson suddenly lived for me . . . it was absolutely new to me, because of its littleness and its green cover and its type and its blessed lack of pictures.

September, 1895. Why should it be that when one longs to be of use, when one tries to be of use, one is so often set down as an ornamental member of society? . . . Why is there never any need of me, that I can fill? I must be blind at the moment, when I say this: but I am very much bewildered. Even the people who seem glad and proud when they read some of the things that I could not help writing never cease to speak of me as an ornamental member of society who toils not neither spins. It seems that, although we are willing to speak of old books and well-known poems as 'work' — and to acknowledge indebtedness to the men who gave us what their lives had taught them, we cannot look upon books in the making — first work of those we know — as anything but superfine *idlesse*, words, words, words.

I know, indeed, that no one could be much indebted to me for anything that I have said or am saying, and yet, slight as they are, the things were inevitable and they were made out of live human days. The raw material, however faultily wrought, cannot be wholly worthless; it was not bought for a little.

September, 1895. I read some Verlaine — and as usual felt pricked and tormented with the fine sting of unaccountable beauty. Such vowel modulations I never saw.

They are uncanny. . . . It's the *contour subtil* of music that haunts one hopelessly. Translate Verlaine indeed! Translate Schumann. No one ever said Nothing as exquisitely as that Frenchman. . . . I try to read aloud to myself, and before three stanzas are past, the tears sometimes run down my cheeks. And the thing may be utterly untragic: and I am not given to weeping.

Bref, I went home feeling like the veriest cobbler of doggerel verse. It seemed to me that my mind was clad in burlap, that my shoes must go clump-clump on the pavement. And I was stricken because of my own outrageous laziness and presumption: and swore that I would delve and hammer day and night over the rudiments of technique.

October, 1895. To-day, I lighted the fire in my study. Such was its pagan fascination that I could do nothing but look at it. I had hoped to celebrate this consecration fittingly. I had planned to burn salt and spices and to offer up verses in smoke and to commune with the singing and unresting spirit; but alack — the cold weather overtook me unwitting — hurried — spiceless — unacceptable. I sprinkled a little salt upon it, and hailed it with all allegiance; but further ceremonies were not.

We couldn't study, though. We sat on the fur rug before it — and watched the bloom and fading of the live fire-roses, and flew up the chimney with the song of those ἐφήμεροι.

October, 1895. I have always longed for the experience of sudden grown-up acquaintance with a literature absolutely new to me instead of one I have grown up with. Now I know what it is. I am born into the universe of Dante.

It is not because the genius is superhuman, or even abnormal, that he seems to us a thing apart; it is not that he experiences rare days and dreams — but because he picks up that which we cast aside — because he perceives the abiding glory in the things of every day.

October, 1895. To-day began gloriously, but I chanced

upon Carlyle's reminiscences of his wife — and it broke my spirit into pieces and made my day a strange bewilderment. It is one of the most truly awful things I have ever read . . . it lays hold of one's heart with the tenacious fingers of suffering.

Professor Norton lectured in Italian 4 this afternoon. The dear old man looks so mildly happy and benignant while he regrets everything in the age and the country — so contented, while he gently tells us it were better for us had we never been born in this degenerate and unlovely age — that I remain fixed between wrath and unwilling affection. I should like to have a square talk with him. I wonder if these dear and reverend people realize what an impression they give the younger ones when they beg them to believe that there is nothing high and lovely in this country or this age. I put down most of his lecture in quotation marks; some of it I tried to listen to respectfully and with patience. But my hope scorched me.

November, 1895. This day sings. . . . In the afternoon I went to the recital.[1] I stood to hear the Reason Why All Things Are . . . Fortune turned her wheel and the whir of it shed star-dust upon me. She shook the boughs of the ash-tree Ygdrasil and I picked up wondrous fruit, stars and showers, birds and nests, rainbows, by shreds, live dragon-flies, crescent moons, and singing leaves. I have pockets full of them now. . . . He played so that the whole city rose new and perfect in a larger symmetry. This I know because the streets were crooked when I went into Music Hall; but the way was straight before me when I came out: and there were vanishing points and divine perspective everywhere.

[1] Paderewski.

To Horace E. Scudder

1 GARDEN STREET
December 4, 1895

DEAREST MR. SCUDDER:

You were very disappointing to give over the dedication of our mahogany. We had long looked forward to it — especially I. (The others would resent this — even dispute it; but they are not here, so I shall say what I please.)

At last I stole the time to read concerning the Parting of the Ways. Surely it is high time that some one pointed it out. I agree with you. In spite of the general masculine alarm, women will never be men; the eternal feminine is not to be done away with. Equality has never seemed to me to mean twinship; and while I, for one, if I ever grow up into something worthy to be called poet, for instance, shall groan in the spirit if any tether me with the *-ess* — I have not yet aspired to become half-back on any foot-ball team. This sounds flippant, I know, not to say foolish, but you understand the spirit — you should. I'm cutting Greek 2 to tell you how much I enjoyed the paper. You said this so well, and so wittily. Do say some more about it soon. The iron is indubitably hot.

There are beautiful things in 'The Hamadryad,' are there not? I feel a bit uneasy about the way in which the little descriptive prelude — most lovely in itself — *preludes* the Voice; but I know how hard it is to manage such a thing — humanly. Those wet leaves . . . bat-like — clinging against the window-pane — are not easily forgotten, are they? Do you know Mr. Valentine?

I have written two or three rather tenuous bits since October; but I'm waiting for some fine day when I shall cut everything, and go a-maying among singing leaves in despite of cold and instructors.

You were rather terrible to call 'Young Hope' rambling. He rambled, to be sure, but, I had fondly thought, circumspectly, and in the fear of — art. I laughed much over his failure to bear himself seemly.

I do hope that you have been to hear Paderewski. One of his best recitals always means apotheosis for me. As a rule, I can talk volubly, afterwards — in fact, juggle with words to an extent that astonishes myself; but after that last recital nothing was possible save *sospirare* — a state of things which I have hardly experienced before. I saw, suddenly, words as creeping things that come from hutches and burrows, catching a little sunlight now and then, but wingless — dark — ἐφήμεροι. This would have saddened me very much, if I hadn't reached apotheosis; but I understood the solar system clearly by that time, and I knew all *Reasons Why*. Unfortunately, I forgot many of them next day, else I would tell you many things now.

Always yours sincerely

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

January, 1896. It is odd — how one learns the hostility of solitude and the friendliness of the world — the hostility of the world and the friendliness of solitude — and learns and relearns, and is hurt by the one and healed by the other, over and over again.

February, 1896. . . . I'm so much of a pagan that there seems to me something degrading about a hurt that you cannot be rid of — I feel, like an Israelite, that people with wounds are unfit to serve in the Tabernacle.

March, 1896. . . . Sometimes in latest October I have looked at a little maple-tree (whose yellow leaves still clung) standing against this deepening of twilight depths — sheer, straight, exquisitely alive, poised like a winged thing, growing like a song, reaching with the vagueness and longing of a dream — and not content with being manifold in those wonderful leaves, the creature, prodigal of life, shook off a thousand little shadows on the pale ground.

March, 1896. Finish the first draught of 'The Wayfarers.' Was foolish enough to read it — doggedly, the instant I had done so. Felt, of course, the dull hostility of the whole thing to my ideal. Always do. Can't be helped. I know enough about poetry to perceive even in this blind

dismay that there are mighty good patches in it. But I don't want patches. I want a whole. . . . It was a glorious wrestle, no matter what the result may be.

Good God, what must it be to attain for once! But I would not be churlish about this: the making of it was happiness.

March, 1896. . . . It knits one's mind anew to have some long piece of work to fall back upon . . . there's nothing so unsightly and demoralizing as this persistent melancholy. I hate it almost as Saint Francis of Assisi hated it; it seems to me a kind of spiritual slovenliness.

March, 1896. She loved my rooms and we went purring about them: then we chattered of people and things: and it was good to have her ask about them and approve and disapprove and sympathize and take my part. It was so good to have her wish to see what I had written lately. I showed her 'The Wayfarers' and she read it, I standing on the chair behind her and looking over her shoulder. She liked it, she liked it; she reached out after my hand after she had read it, in our old boyish way of demonstration. Ah, it was good to see her. She's a mind and a heart and a hearth-fire. I can warm my hands at the ever-present thought of her and feel a little more at home in the world.

To Mary Mason

1 GARDEN STREET
March 20, 1896

DEAR MRS. MASON:

. . . I do hope that Sunday will show us a little loving kindness. Spring seems imminent here; if it manages to escape the Academic Blight, 'twill be welcome. That awful visitation, I am ashamed to say, has almost slain me, of late. I dare not boast escape, by any means; in fact, I felt my eyes glazing, Wednesday, but I revived, with the help of one or two people, and I hope to stay alive in despite of Cambridge. I have never before experienced the genuine blight, and I emerge with a lively sympathy for all Harvard Graduates, and a keener understanding

of D. G. M. and Mr. Moody. How they endured this place for four years, I — marvel. The people here '*suffer* the "Little Children"' in the poignant sense of the word.

Yours with hopes of Sunday
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

April, 1896. . . . Behold she told me that she had her ticket for the Paderewski recital to-day and one for me — too! What could be lovelier? For the first time I was beginning to wonder whether I really could stand up through it. . . . But to go — to go and to have a seat! In all the ten times that I have heard him, I have never had a seat, save toward the end when there was some unexpected vacancy. . . . O but 'twill be good to hear music again! So often I find myself dreaming of it as a kind of Bethesda, unfailing well spring, touched by the Angel — that holds all healing and forgetfulness and new life; and so often do I find myself thinking that there is no one to lift me unto the pool, but another steppeth down before me.

April, 1896. My dear Miss Haskell came to see me this afternoon and we talked of music, music, music. It was enough to make your heart hop out and poise on the window-sill and chirp for pure joy and irresponsibility. She is ready to talk all day about it; so am I. And we reminisced, expounded, related, and anticipated until we were breathless and reduced to small shrieks of joy.

I have tried to hold the winter up high with both hands.

April, 1896. Yesterday Professor Child read at the open meeting of the English Club. We talked to him in the parlor for a few moments before the reading and I put some of my trailing arbutus in his buttonhole. . . . Speaking of the abominably cold weather of late he said to me — 'I shall not have a plant to show you; — no, no — they're all cut down, so — dreadful to look at. Every one of them that has any sense has stayed under.' This confidentially, as if he were betraying a secret. 'Ah, but,' he added, 'when Nature takes it into her head to whip up,

she can do astonishing things. "A-ha," says she, "think I can't catch up, do you? Give you *go* for three days."'

May Day, 1896. A fair day. I read 'Romeo and Juliet'; then 'Adonais'; then coaxed the fire, for it is cold still, for all May. And I was happy because life was breathed upon and enriched once more; and I was aware of the blur of sound from the loom at work.

Everything grew beautiful. I know how.

The heart of the fire besought us; the shade of the lamp shone white like a crocus newly come up, against the welcoming green of the walls; the good little chairs sat about, comradely.

I had not spoken a word for two hours; and I thought of the curly reticence of budded leaves that won't tell what they are going to be; and kept quiet with a new joy of sympathy for them while my heart was sprouting all the time.

I thought of a great many things — all in the same silence tenacious of lovely secrets. . . . If I were a garden place you would not be able to see me for crocuses.

June, 1896. I took it into my head to make a copy of the Burne-Jones Paderewski. It turned out so neatly that I jumped for joy and resolved to copy everything for ten miles about.

This little coda to my day astonished me. 'Why, after all I am very lucky, I am very happy,' I said to myself. 'I have so many ways of amusing myself and so much to see in ordinary things. You are a lucky child, J. P., cheer up.' So I went to bed quite happily. . . . To-day I painted some more: the painted things are all horrid, but it is fun at the time and I cannot help learning something, even by myself.

There seems absolutely to be no escape from learning things: I found myself thinking with great surprise last night. 'Thou hast set my feet in a large room.'

Indeed, it is true.

Oh, some day maybe I can take lessons in water-colors. Maybe I can sketch.

August, 1896. Yesterday I heard from Mr. Scudder.

He advised me 'not to attempt publication in a book this season.' He gave me several practical reasons for this advice, adding that the book was not ready and that he was not afraid of my impairing the spontaneity of the verse by over-elaboration, that, in short, he thought the work still needed vigorous pruning.

And he is right. I had not, of course, intended to print the things just as they stand, all of them, or so soon as he had supposed. I am still puzzled to know why the first paragraph of the letter gave me such odd pain; it must be that I am still very young and more impatient than I am aware.

He said good and kind things besides, advising me to take further pains, wait a bit, and 'exchange a substantial repute as an artist for a fleeting notoriety as a young poet.'

Even in the first moment, I saw the wisdom of this with unwilling eyes. It is so very true, so much worthier, so much more conscientiously artistic: and such unendurably good advice to anybody who is all on the wing with haste and half afraid of dying before she has a chance to share bread, such as it is.

I may as well say it. It is young and morbid, and I must stop being so young and morbid if I intend ever to make any bread that shall be worth sharing.

Some day I shall thank dear Uncle H. for this more than for all else; I know that. And I do thank him now. Only it takes things so long to ripen, and yet summer-time's so short.

Come, you *must* wait. Swallow it and go to work.

To Horace E. Scudder

SOUTH HINGHAM, *August* 23, 1896

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

Do not for a moment be doubtful about my decision. You will know how much I should like to disagree with you in this matter, but honestly I cannot, and it took no long reflection to show me that. Your wise letter made me won-

der why I should have been so headlong, and, since you must have wondered yourself, here's the reason — almost all of it — quite as young and crude as any one would expect. First — no, not first, but here, unmistakably — is the fact that print is altogether lovely in my eyes; I do not deny it. Then, and this is more, it is true that I am childishly eager to make everybody share my green apple. I have to thank you for your patience, under this forcible hospitality; and some day, I know, I shall thank you yet more for reminding me that the apples will give people more pleasure when they are ripe.

I know, too, that you cannot have forgotten how hard it is to wait for things to grow, and how many times one is eager to call them done and dig them up by the roots!

So I am not going to regret this too much. (Even now, though, I would not have you think that I had hoped to print the verses immediately. I had dreamed a bit of next year, but there were many changes to be made, to my mind.)

Now for the work which you are kind enough to offer me — it sounds very cheering. You know how uncouth my prose can be, and, if you see any reason why I might do it acceptably, I shall be very glad. I do not, but I am ready to try; and, if faith will move mountains, it ought to inform my sentences with symmetry. I have it on academic authority that they are apt to be without form and void; but it suits me not to believe this wholly. And, if I keep some faith in myself, and you keep any faith in me, something good must come of that.

I shall hope to see you soon. Till then, believe me

Always sincerely yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

September, 1896. . . . All about us that benignant musing of summer about to go. Now it is that dumbness begins to hurt again: and I grieve most for puppies that sob to be understood. Soon the wakening cold will be here; and then dumbness will be torment.

September 12, 1896. My Professor Child is dead. It is a loss to the world and it is a loss to me.

Thinking over the few memories that I keep of him, treasured up, one might be puzzled to tell why his death gave me such a queer loneliness, if one had never met him.

For I never talked with him but four times — one of these times only a moment long; and besides this, a word with him in Memorial Hall one evening and a few letters are all that give me the right to call him a friend. Yet it was the sweetest recognition that any one could wish. The newspaper tributes to the great philologist, the laborious scholar, have a look of strangeness to my eyes when I think of the things we have said to each other. For from the first moment I heard him speak, his scholarly renown concerned me least, and barring a question about my little courses at college, he never spoke to me of studies. I think I lack not reverence when I believe that for those moments we two, great and small, wise and foolish, old and young, were at one in a childish confidence of sympathy. What he said of his beloved ballads and his more beloved garden, in the dear letter about the roses, gave me the odd delight of a shared secret. And I can never forget the day we walked in his garden together and the lovely pain of home-longing that his words gave me —

'Has the winter been a happy one?'

It was lovely, too, to catch an unexpected glimpse of him the evening of a Shakespeare reading in Sanders Theatre. I was hurrying through the crowd after Miss Irwin, when I saw him and turned back to speak, and was quite dumb with pleasure to find that he knew me. I always grasped his hand and smiled at him quite helplessly in the peculiarly childish friendliness that he made me feel; and he beamed upon me through his glasses with a kind of anxious keenness.

'I hope you have brought something to put on your head,' he said to me. 'Oh, yes,' I answered, holding up the lace scarf in my hand and tying it on to satisfy him.

'Gossamer, gossamer,' he whispered deprecatingly. 'Why didn't you bring a cobweb?'

February, 1897. . . . I feel sure there is such a thing as 'heart.' The thing that warms, makes vital — communicates. I say it is a friendliness of more than intellectual quality that makes me wistful — that makes me long to cross the room to some one's side and say, 'Tell me what grieves you; tell me what makes you glad.' It is that motherish impulse — no, not necessarily motherish: daughterish sometimes, when I want to cross the room and say, 'It is this that grieves me — it is this that makes me glad.' . . . What I mean by 'heart' here is just the human eagerness to minister to need wherever we see it.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

KING STREET
February 24, 1897

DEAR ABBIE:

. . . You will be relieved to know that I am not *quite* so pessimistic; because H. E. S. has taken 'The Enemy Listens.' But I did have a touch of grip, that weird seizure that gives people such appalling blues, and last week I almost died of melancholy and hated mankind with a good heart.

The Myths are truly progressing, if you want to know. And one's mind bourgeons. Yesterday I planned a marrowy four-act tragedy on Christopher Marlowe! (I hope it may not go the way of all the rest . . .) This morning, still rapt, I confess to having rummaged appendices and footnotes in my Rutledge edition of Marlowe, *instead* of writing Part II of 'Cupid and Psyche.' But one cannot be a slave of the pen — er — a — well — forever. This unremitting drudgery — etc. — I think I really *will* go to work now (clock says 11.10 A.M.). I can trust to luncheon to interrupt me soon!

Yours as ever J. P. P.

May, 1897. Behold a new member of our household,

Cino, the blue-eyed puffball Angora with creamy streakings under his chin and on his paws, and a tail plumy, but pointed withal like a goodly paint-brush. When I brought him home last night he was good, but a trifle subdued and inquiring; straddled about the room, tremulous with bulk of fur. This morning he is as gay as a dancing-bear. Just now he sleeps, up the sleeve of my gray dressing-gown which reminds him of his people. He is a sweet. He mews as softly as a sandpeep and purrs like any hummingbird. In fact he hardly purrs yet — he vibrates visibly!

May, 1897. I had a note yesterday from a man in Illinois asking if it would be imposing too much on my kindness to give him a brief outline of my underlying thought in 'The Enemy Listens.' . . . Perhaps I am stubborn and very likely I am stupid, but I cannot see that it is faultily obscure. Complex the idea is, and hard to put clearly, but I should really like to have somebody state it more clearly without signboards. If I am really going to be a faultily obscure person, it's good for me that I don't know it. I should die of despair.

I desire above all things to deal with things that concern all people.

I don't want to be a 'literary' poet. Heaven forbid!

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
June 5, 1897

DEAR DR. SCUDDER:

You shall have the proofs Monday morning, and I will gladly bring them myself. I was coming once more, of course, with one thousand and one riddles for you; but, lest I should forget them under the lowering cloud of a last office-call, I must tell you:

1. I met Miss Alice Brown the other day, and how I wish I had met her long ago. She is very delightful, with a kind of misted brightness — don't you think so? Highly talented and unassuming. If you think she really *meant*

that she would like to have me call on her quite soon, I will, indeed. It is delicious to meet somebody. For (this in your ear, and do not be accusing me of over-sensitiveness) it is a glad and a fortunate thing, artistically, to begin — very — young; but, *humanly*, it brings all kinds of odd grief and loneliness. Your own contemporaries are apt to fight shy of you (you know they are) and your elders judge that it is wholesome for you to be seen and not heard. Sometimes, for company, you just have to say your prayers, on the principle of the sparrow finding him a house; and I feel that too frequent prayers come to interfere with works! What do you say? I do not know why I write this just now; but here is enough of it.

2. I am wondering whether you have forgotten the little explanatory note about the happy-go-lucky use of Greek and Latin names in the stories. *You* were going to put that in, were you not?

3. And I am wondering who knows about the book, at the Office, in case I have to speak of anything after you sail away; and I am wondering how fast it is all printed, when it's once begun, and so on and so on. Is it not alarming? You will have to pin this letter up in your desk, and check off the items, when I come.

I am coming to see Mrs. Scudder in Cambridge some day soon. Perhaps you will be there too.

Very sincerely yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

August, 1897. . . . The moon wanted us — she coaxed like a Romany after a stray child. I heard her. I thought at the same time of the kidnapping instinct in all nature. For if you stay a bit too long, you can hear how all the trees want you and coax you, and entreat you and reach arms after you. And the sun tries to drink you up and the wind says, *Come with me;* and the moon is always singing spells — and the sea wants you too. (Come out, come out, come out.)

October, 1897. To-morrow morning I mean to go to K. P.'s

studio . . . the need of keeping one's sanity in the finest sense, the need of a work that is tangible, companionable, contemplative — of something that shall save me from a consuming mentality . . . the great solace that it is, when you are wearied out and bitter, to look long at something beautiful and make it over again till you are healed with contemplation.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
October 30, 1897

DEAR A. F. B.:

No wonder I didn't come, Monday! I had not written a devil of a thing, and I dared not show my empty head among you. Then, that very afternoon, came a Special Delivery from the 'A. M.' (picture my inflated opinion of myself), begging me to do a review of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Letters, for the December number. Only they had to have the copy by Friday (yesterday). I said I would do it, and went in Tuesday to get the proof-sheets of the book. There proved to be two volumes of them — about 900 pages to get through and mark and consider and inwardly digest and write 1400 words about in 'clear English prose' — you know what that means to me. Consequently I got it done at 4.15 P.M. yesterday and took it in — pell-mell — without stopping for a breath; eyes left like two dried raisins. And they seemed so surprised to see me, and so suddenly smitten as to their conscience over the length of time, that I began to understand I needn't have hurried myself after all.

And that's why I haven't written anything *this* week either. I tell you what, I'm on the rush — just for a day or so — and while I feel industrious I am going to send everything everywhere, and see if I can't make somebody take something.

See what you fire me to do!

Good-bye. I disappear as a frog plops into a pond.

Yours feverishly

J. P. P.

December, 1897. It gave me a sense of ghostly reminiscence to finger the embroideries; they are so close to lives far off in foreign countries, near in the human wistfulness after beauty. I turned them over and over, folded and unfolded and looked at them till my senses were steeped in the color and shape, dim, significant fragrance of them, and my mind was filled with a strange tenderness . . . sensitive within an hour to the presence of an individuality unknown . . . the whim of the worker, the turn and dip and flutter of the fancy — the gleams of that mystical something that has beckoned and must beckon makers of any kind.

January, 1898. I have had almost a whole day alone: with the sunshine pouring in from three windows at a time, a pail of clay in a corner, a bread-board with the Laughing Girl, laughing loudly in plaster and almost as loudly in clay; the cutting table covered with MSS., likewise the little green seat: and me writing a little bit on everything. O, it is so good to say Anything — a lyric, a little lyric, a lyricinettino! Have I had a good time? Have I laughed to myself? Have I felt like a dumb skylark?

1898. I cannot stand this incessant irritation of Criticism that is eating away the capacity for Reverence or Joy or Humility or Knowledge in all this generation. You cannot find anybody giving himself, or herself, up single-mindedly to an ennobling pleasure. They may dispose of the joy in a sentence. . . . I'm glad they did not see the Lord entering Jerusalem while the people sang Blessed is He that cometh! And strewed palm branches in the way. I can hear them now, shaking off a foreign emotion and putting themselves at ease with saying how meagre some of the palm branches were and that somebody near by had a painful voice and would have offered a more acceptable worship if he had kept still.

To Mary Mason

1 *March*, 1898

DEAR MRS. MASON:

. . . We feel like a household of 'Les Aveugles.' How are you? Better soon.

Beyond a certain point, such a miscellany of inconveniences makes me hilarious; which would be a tonic state of mind, if 'twere not that too much laughter is almost as bad for your spun-glass infant as the other thing. However, spring is coming, and soon I shall hear the sparrows *chassée-ing* along my roof and chattering *Eh, eh? Qu'est-ce que c'est? Quoi donc! Mais oui! — C'est ça! C'est ça! C'est ça! Oui, oui!* And I shall rouse myself to learn the news.

Very soon, too, I shall be well enough to — ah — go out to Tea at places, and spend the evening. . . . I thought I would let *you* know first.

You cannot think how much your ministrations have cheered us all. It is so rare a thing, you know, to have a friend who remembers the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace, friendliness. And, all arguments to the contrary, I think we humans need the look and sound and touch of one another, at times!

I am hardly able to wait for some little talk of my doctor (apropos) — he is such an untiring Heart. I saw him for the first time only six or seven weeks ago, and his overflowing humanity, and my need of it, have made us fast friends, I believe. The man's youth is gone — you see that with grief; he is worn with doing for people. He has a gaunt look, eyes eloquently dulled with work and watching, a look of burnt-out nervous energy. And yet he radiates the most astonishing strength, because he Understands. As for me, when I set eyes on him, my mind says *Oh . . . !* and my arms reach up, somehow; and I am five years old and I-want-to-be-carried!

Am I offended with your criticism of 'Pity'? Do I mind? Offended never. Mind? Of course. . . . Because I

am fond of the thing, and must always want my people to be fond of things when they can. But it is well to know wherein work fails of its purpose, and for whom, and why.

The speech of the little star, you see, was not meant to be any very distinct, translatable message, but the musing, a little curious, as well as tender, of a passer-by, whose thought is a bit blurred by its own radiance — a something vague, loving — futile and forgetful. And the evasion of the last line was *meant* for evasion. (Am I clear?) This is not excuse, you know, at all — only comment. 'Cause, if you wanted something clear and determinate, as a message, you did not get it; and that is the fault of my idea of 'Pity.'

Mr. Savage's poem is charming, and I am very glad to have it. You will have him up there to meet me sometime, won't you? It would be so pleasant — not merely to talk — but to hold one's tongue, in company with a loyal follower of . . . . . but what name is there beautiful enough for It?

This is a long letter, and I must be going! I do hope you are all better and better. *Attentions* have been most one-sided; but you know our hearts, I hope. At any rate, if other means of locomotion fail, you'll see us coming some some day in our pumpkin, drawn by mice.

Yours affectionately

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

P.S. O, debonnaire and difficult woman! I *must* get vigorous, if only to write something that may please you!

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
14 *March*, 1898

DEAR DR. SCUDDER:

The calendar says *March!* And I gather up my wits, shoulder my every-day, and think of becoming articulate once more. . . .

I'm truly obliged to confess that it has been rather a trying winter; my Canzone was well-nigh put out of hearing, to my great home-sickness. There were many things to be done and left undone, for a few people — old friends and new; and we've had much company first and last. 'Tis curious, is it not, that your obvious duty sometimes demands of you the putting away, for a while, of all that seems to you most precious, most high and quiet and helpful: and so a year may cost you untold effort and endurance, and yet go the way of things wasted and unsightly. I do believe, though, that life is utilitarian, and I will not be too much discouraged by the emptiness of my own treasury this spring. Certainly all experience is a possession, and I shall have much to say when I feel able to say it.

(Poor Samaritan! This preachy communication pursues him to Italy! By this you will know that we are in need of spring over here.)

I'm excusing myself, you see, for all the plans, great and small, left unwritten; for I have nothing to show, since last spring, but some lyrics — none too lyrical.

You'll be amused to hear that I *did* start in, early in the winter, with lessons in modelling, at Mrs. Prescott's studio, and a very lovely and congenial work I found it. Clay and I get on capitally, and we and our instructress spent some fine mornings together, till I had to put off going, for a time, on account of illness. Yes, I blush at the unheroic tale — I have been a little ill for some weeks. That's what shortens the story of my winter; but it brings me to something good and new — Dr. Nichols. You know him? I speak of him here because I won't be wholly churlish about the ambiguous gifts of this rather difficult year; and, if a little illness is a hateful thing, nevertheless this brought me a new friend. And, heavens and earth, what *is* a happening, if a friend be not one? We have the longest possible talks and readings about everything in the world, while he parenthetically ponders the latent whimsy of my temperament that gives me a fantastic heart just now. And, as he says that he is interested in making me as much

of a dynamo as I wish to be myself, I can take idleness and little sugar pellets with a docile spirit. Certainly the man is an untiring heart.

Earlier in the winter, I did see Miss Irwin now and then — not to talk to, much; but one has only to catch a glimpse of her warm, strong face and downy hair, to feel refreshed.

I'm tucking in a single sonnet, not because it is anything rich, but just because it *ought* to be a little lovable, it's so true; and for the sake of auld lang syne.

Do give my love to Mrs. Scudder and the girls (I shall write to Kitty in a minute — figuratively speaking), and believe me

Yours as ever
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

P.S. As I glance this over, it looks to be a sorry tale. Don't read it so. This very minute, there are splinters of rainbow all over my wall, from a crystal that I put in the sunshine to catch it, and I'm growing well-er myself, and April's coming.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

29 *April*, 1898

O, 'Locks, 'Locks!

Why weren't you there?

? ? ?

I know why you weren't, quite well, because you told me, but it seems too bad to be true. I would have writ my mournings and condolence, if I had not been so busy alternately tearing my hair over the war-news, and zealously plaiting silver braid into a coif for my own peace-loving head. It is so hard to realize that such things are really *happening:* and I went to the Festival, and danced as if I would never grow old. I wore — but you shall see it when you come out. And everybody said — but I could not scream things so peacocky — oh, no, indeed.

Everybody in the world was lovely to behold, and I thought of you many times, yes, right there — among dear

little bow-men and beaux-men, and nobles and crusaders — yes, even Bertram and Harry Goodhue, and Arlo Bates and Winthrop Pierce (dear elders) and Holker Abbott, and Howard Walker. OH, if you could have seen *him* in full armor — hearty, homely, scrub-headed man, turned into the most invincible, irresistible soldier, with his small boy for a squire. I met him and talked with him, agape with goggle-eyed, bread-and-butter admiration. *O cielo!* I met them all — the above-mentioned, and Heaven grant I may meet them again!

Pointed shoes and trailing skirts did not keep me from dancing every second that there was musicry to caper to: but at length the chuckle-headed minstrels and fiddlers, being full of sleep, took themselves and our jollity away, and I came home, with unwillingness and Mother; and Marion and Hollis Webster, and eke a cab-man; — and reached my door at 3 A.M. O Happy Day!

Well, how's you?

It rains as if it would never stop. May-Day in two days. This is a sweet clime. I doubt not there may be a bud or two, incautiously come out, by the 4th of July. Why did I leave Fiesole? Does anybody know?

Yours WING

I followed your hopeful counsel, and promptly sent MSS. (to the number of four apiece) to Cy and H. They came as promptly back, according to their custom, with further samples of letter-writing in print. Can you lend me a nickel till the seventeenth (17th) of next October?

? ? ?

I am full of honors — and beef-tea; but I need a hat.

To Mary Mason

6 May, 1898

DEAREST MRS. MASON:

. . . What a day this is! The buds do bud and the sky is very sky-ey. It makes me dance to see the little tree shadows come again. It makes me sing likewise (in a very

little voice). But that is perhaps the cause of this disproportionate joy. I think — no, I am sure that the earliest bull-frogs that tune themselves, spring nights, go fairly mad with love of their own music, and feel sure that the *canto fermo* of the constellations would be a flat performance without them. I look for the weather that shall bid me sit on fences, though. New England has to be disciplinary even about Maytime.

But some day, you nice little pin-feathered cherubim, let me go along in the sun, walking and leaping and praising God! . . .

June, 1898. New complications all around regarding new people. I suppose one is never free of care after one is grown up; save in the company of grass and a little new moon.

June, 1898. I have never laughed as incessantly as this week. We have danced in the shade, loafed in the sun, awakened and gone to sleep laughing uproariously: we have juggled and wrought charms by candle-light on the way to bed; writing out messages for ——, rubbing them in on the carpet over his head, and walking around them fantastically garlanded with out-of-door spoils. We have been ecstatically silly: and every single day has been fair.

It is a *good time*.

. . . We can both be as gay as marigolds on the smallest provocation and seldom feel older than eleven — wherein, I say, we are blessed creatures, and we know it.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

26 KING STREET, 27 *July*, 1898

DEAR LOCKS:

I have spent the evening in good company, with Master Will S——, in short, to comfort my homesick spirit for the lack of Princeton, and the cloud-shadows, and the hills and the valleys and the evening star, and the wise squirrels and the silly sheep. And funnily enough, as I read and re-read

the Sonnets, I perceived many of my friends and companions about me — looking straight at me through a haze of thought. I wonder why they came, and if they were thinking of me at all: but perhaps it was simply that Will S—— is a House to meet fellow-souls in, and you can't sit long in his company without seeing how the shy creatures outside stray in by twos and threes, not knowing why — only coaxed hither by some promise of fire-light and wine and comprehending eyes. (I'm a little out of my head.)

. . . The news is: Copeland and Day say The Book is to come out in October. So I'm in a *potpourri* of affairs: going to Falmouth a week from Saturday for a little while; not writing anything new, but stuffing scraps of Wm. S—— with the rich satisfaction of Jack Horner, you know how; and writing many letters and plotting many plans. . . .

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET, 27 *July*, 1898

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

Here am I, on my native asphalt once more. And where are you? I'm sending this to be forwarded; but I hope you are nearer than Chocorua: I do, indeed.

It burst upon me suddenly last week that I had a great deal to tell you: for I have hesitated to speak of vague prospects so long that I had almost forgotten my news, *my* news, that is.

Copeland and Day mean to bring out my long-hoped-for (by me!) volume in October; and I do trust that you will not think it too rash of Copeland and Day and me. There have been many delays about it, although they seemed anxious to have it, and — needless to say — assume all the risks of the venture. 'Tis very pleasant to have it wanted; but I assure you that I have pondered and pruned and revised and re-revised, and am about to give the MS. a last sifting; and, as you see, I want to tell you about it.

Anyway, it's going to be called 'The Wayfarers,' and it

has a cover, by my sister, which delighted the heart of *Copeland-and-Day* and ought really to sell *one* edition.

More when I see you; — my confidence in your interest is almost Genuine Pathos, isn't it? This outburst comes thus freshly because I received the Articles of Agreement to sign, a few days ago, after long waiting.

Marion and I expect to go to Falmouth for a week or so, on the 6th of August. May I know where you are before then? Because I want to be at home, if you *do* take this journey into Darkest Suburbs; and, if you cannot, I must surely hunt you out of some sanctum or other, and inquire the way to Venice.

Very sincerely yours
JOSEPHINE PEABODY

August, 1898. I cannot get over it — that our country has been at war and I have done nothing for the men — save send the smallest dole (small perforce) and wait hopefully for shirt patterns that did not arrive, and read about it all, and talk and think.

A war, a war, a war, and I not in it. Words cannot tell how I envy those Red Cross nurses their training and in fact any good human creature its good health and usefulness. And yet I might have done more myself, inches or no inches, heart-whole or hurt. I'll sit a while with ashes on my head and then bestir myself about other things.

August, 1898. The reason why I never read anything in the Athenæum is because I have too many books around me and I'm so greedy and so disquieted by the look of all the unread, and the vague summons of the two floors above and the two galleries to a floor, that my mind is incapacitated and I flutter helplessly between destiny and free will and get nothing from either; only lose a train or two and come home late to tea.

Down at Falmouth, though, I set about replenishing my mental Canzoniere and now I can say by heart twenty-one of the Shakespeare Sonnets (with the numbers thereof). I go about to add sundry Italian things and I have a number

of English lyrics, and so I entertain myself when I am alone.

August, 1898. The first proofs of my book come.[1] I look at them a little, afraid of what I see. . . . To think of the beloved book — sounding perhaps not so much as a whisper to other people. They look pale and thin and unreal and crowded as I see them printed (wonderful though print is!). And yet I know that they are full of my heart's blood and my soul's breath. There will I rest and have my peace, no matter what comes of it all — blankness or answer.

Ben sai, Canzone.

August, 1898. . . . I wandered round and round the counters in DeWolfe Fiske's, saying that I could not buy: but saw, in a second-hand lot newly come from a library, 'The Tragedies of Mr. Wm. Shakespeare' — a facsimile reprint from the first folio (1623): faintly asked the price: and had it of the man for a dollar. 'Tis unbound: I felt sinful all the way home, since dollars are less than scarce. But I'm glad and gladder every time I look at it. It is always Wm. S. who hauls me out of the slough.

Blessed Spirit: I love you next to the Lord God. Befriend me. I'm in rags.

September, 1898. You need never tell me that it is theatric to date strong inspirations from such recognizable moments. I know better. Day after day I have gathered up and treasured revelation from little material sources you would say. And sometimes they are almost funny. So it was the day after I reached home again. Grandmother said to me at tea, 'Wouldn't you like to taste this peach? Mrs. Phinney brought it to me.' . . . 'No, thank you,' said I, casting an unregarding eye at the peach. 'I don't care for any.' 'Do,' said she. 'Why, it grew around here, on King Street!' 'A peach that grew on King Street?' said I! And I began laughing a little inside. It sounded so paradoxical. But I looked at the peach. . . . If you can believe it — a miracle of a peach — great and perfect, sweetly sunburned,

[1] *The Wayfarers.*

tan and flush. It looked inscrutable and promising, so I took a big bite, and then just sat and wondered. For I assure you it was very wonderful. That such a peach should happen in King Street just as if in a Persian garden for an Omar or a Hafiz or a Saadi. Unthrifty loveliness, uncaring sweetness — bound to be a peach whether any one knew it or not, and would have, from sun and rain and King Street earth, that seven times mystic sweetness. . . . Well, I was filled with speculations and new inklings of knowledge, while Grandmother made an innocent meal of the rest, unwitting what was in it, the undisturbed soul! But I set one Up against one Down and felt very wise and well-fed.

September, 1898. Yesterday was Michælmas when A. F. B. and I had purposed to go to town, eat goose, and invoke Saints Gregory and Catherine (see Chambers' 'Book of Days'). A. F. B. even went down to the old Hancock Tavern to ask of the Inn Keeper whether goose would be forthcoming on that day. He said no; he might have planned such a dinner (and advertised it!) if he had been given due notice; but for two errant damsels, no. So we gave it up. But we mean to diversify our monotonous days with home-bred festivals, according to that well-spring of information and reminders, 'The Book of Days' (and the advantage of possessing this work is that you can always find something to celebrate if it's nothing more than an unheard-of saint or the appearance of a strange fish off Dover coast).

Our next is Saint Francis of Assisi's day when we must surely find somewhat to do. Then October 20th we mean to go to the Symphony: but I have got to look up the reason why (above and beyond the great Tschaikowsky symphony). And October 29th is a vigil with Keats.

October 29. I had read Keats off and on all day. I had also read of the last hours of Walter Raleigh (his day), and on going to bed I offered to him certain whiffs of a carefully laid aside cigarette — which I then quenched with rose-water. A. F. B. was to do the like. One must have

company, you see, if 'tis only the high company of Shades.

1898. Well, we lunched with the doctor and Captain S—— yesterday, and had a glimpse of a man who possesses that most precious thing, an appreciative knowledge of men. I have no hope of seeing such people more than once or twice . . . if only the many and highly wrought little talkers and book-makers could meet a few such men for a day — if I could see the men of paragraphs feeling a little shame-faced before the unpretentious man of works. And if I, a maker of bad paragraphs and much verse, might only see a little more life to make them out of! For God knows I hate life at hearsay and call the life of *letters* merely a despicable thing.

October, 1898. October weather brings the old impatient thirst and I read history *too fast to read it*, because I can't wait to know. This is the only way I can remember history, to rest for a while with the great personalities of the times . . . it is a great comfort and comradeship for your little desolate suburban, this high company. Good or bad they are real people and my sense of their reality almost keeps me awake nights.

I'm trying to work each day, but don't succeed, till my book is out. . . . I get in a paragraph or so on something each day, add memoranda to my schemes for work — started the Jan de Vos [1] book yesterday morning in good earnest. . . . And I'm always busied with scraps and oddities, such as reading a MS. for Badger & Co.

. . . The MS. was unexpectedly good, a metrical translation of many idyls from Theocritus, of extraordinary flavor, almost literal and yet in verse of some ingenuity, general quality and frequent music. I was amazed. Don't know who did it.

October, 1898. Perhaps it is silly of me to dream of the drama: and yet I think I am a well-endowed child who can do things if I only *will*, like a tramp sitting on a gold mine and I almost think I have the historical imagination; only I haven't got the history.

[1] *Nom de plume.*

October, 1898. . . .When people have been talking about their conception of the seat of 'power' I have always thought of my hands. Not the *seat* of power, because I feel that in my head clearly enough, but I am often conscious of my hands in a peculiar way as if a stream of conscious magnetism and insight and personality flowed from my brain and eyes down through my arms ready to flow out at the fingers. I've spoken of it before, and I have often wondered at it vaguely because it is a distinct though subtle consciousness, and is the outcome of no ideal at all, unless it can have sprung imaginatively from the 'laying on of hands.' . . . I feel as if my hands could give and take messages (and messages of authority) almost better than eyes and lips: I found, in the little modelling I did, that my sense of touch talked to me clearlier than I had dreamed. I note this for future reference . . . this has come into my mind sometimes . . . as a small and inexplicable peculiarity of mine.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

5 October, 1898

DEAR LOCKS:

Again our tryst is delayed. For the rains descended and the floods came.

I tell you what, I did not spend a restful day, after picturing you waiting for me on the balcony, while the clock said 10.30 and latterly 10.45!

What on earth should appear but a young lady reporter for the 'Advertiser,' armed with a file-proof from Copeland and Day — to ask me questions about myself and the book. I had to get up, brush my hair briefly, and go down and see her. Of course, I tried to be cautious, since we have all heard of reporters: but she was so nice and young and seemed so conscientious that I fell to saying merry jests. Behold this morning an account of me, enough to make you bite the carpet in an agony of mirth: 'tis headed with a tale that I *expressly contradicted*, which represents Uncle Horace accepting for the 'A. M.' something that I wrote at

the age of fourteen: and it says that '*the young girl wrote on and on.*' As you may suppose, I appear as a young creature of extraordinary beauty, in a wash-dress of foam-green, with a black bow in my hair, and a black kitten (the adjustable *Bruin*) accenting effects by disporting himself in my ruffles (one round my neck and one round the hem of the skirt). Best of all, you'll be pleased to hear that 'I never tire of tramping.'

In the afternoon, just as I was preparing to curl up and rest, appeared Mr. E—— of the 'Boston Sunday Journal.' He came at three and left at a quarter to five. He was a nice, square-built, fairish young man, young and rather conscientious (I think), although he was fierce after items. He wrote away very steadily, and inquired into the make-up of the Book, and my ideas of the late war (!), etc., etc. I still clung to *Bruin* for support, and I shall look to see priceless Angoras sporting about the place in the next article — watched over by the portrait of my great-grandfather Simon de Vos. If you will believe it, when I confessed my regard for the animal kingdom, he began to write down 'enthusiastic horse-back rider.' But I overheard and seized him by the hair, and talked to him like an aunt, and made him blushfully scratch it out, by assuring him that we never in the world had owned a horse!

Well: — Badger called in the evening, and I merrily — if rather hoarsely — talked from 7.45 to 10.55 P.M. And then I fell into my bed with groans of mirth; and woke myself up with laughing in the middle of the night.

Don't know when I shall see you, but I'll try to come to town soon. Yours wearily

J. P.

To Anna H. Branch

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
22 *October*, 1898

DEAR ANNA:

I'm moved to write in the spirit of somebody who puts her hands over your eyes and says: Who Is It? And it is

very daring and familiar of me, considering the honors that hedge you round. But I have only just heard the news, through a paragraph in the 'Criterion,' and I must tell you how delighted I am for you. I have seen verse of yours from time to time, . . . and I have said to myself many times that I must write; but these two years have been busy and very difficult; and I did not write.

This was such a genuine surprise, though! I had entirely forgotten the competition. I wanted to send something myself, for the fun of it, but couldn't, not being a graduate. And I am so pleased to know a valorous child of success. For to me, success is in itself a beautiful and inspiring thing. It is good to look on and see a creature try for something — and get it! It is good for the creature, and it is good for on-looking creatures who wait their turn.

I don't know where on earth you are; but I shall entrust this to the Merritts, in the hope that they may know something more of you.

Heartiest congratulations and all good cheer, from

Yours sincerely

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

November, 1898. No news of the book or of anything else. . . .

My first and best beloved, I am blind and sick in every inch of my soul. I don't see why God permits such long useless unappreciable torture of that which is the best of my life. And it is no comfort or assurance to reflect upon so many people who are far unhappier than I. Misery does *not* love company. The sight of happy creatures anywhere would be gladdening. But I see none.

November, 1898. Now what shall I do? . . . the new outspoken thing that is not clear to me yet. A blunter music like the ring of everyday tools — a something homely and beautiful, a workman's day with furrowed roads and sunset windows and a roadside rest in it: a something very intelligible with the simplicity of folk-song.

It is the delight of making that I am most in need of.

November, 1898. It is mine;[1] it frightens me, indeed, to see how sacredly I hold it, altogether for the sake of that it is made of — not, Heaven knows, for the workmanship.

It is young, it has plenty of defects, it is idealistic; it harps on the same ideas; it is (they say) often obscure, though I do not see why: the very music of it has a sameness, I think, a keen and piercing voice . . . the far cry of youth inconsolable with homesickness and so far blameworthy. Then, the pet words and the unconscious conventions, so familiar hitherto that they seemed like nature; and the lack of any direct word from lack of true experience about the typically human events.

But the heart of that book I know: and it is beautiful. I dare hold it up as high as I can lift it, and say it is Beautiful.

December, 1898. God knows with what wistfulness and secret joy I sometimes think I am a child of Light by birth. We all are, but I have more to answer for, because I feel it on my head, somehow. Ah, child, child, find yourself. Don't compromise. Don't do things by halves. Do; dare; suffer; shine.

To Frederic F. Sherman

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
December, 1898

DEAR MR. SHERMAN:

What a rapturous wind-fall was this Christmas number of the Magazine![2] Did you know anything about it? *I* didn't — till I came home from town and heard that two copies had arrived, and that there was 'something' of mine in it — 'Daily Bread.' Everybody was, at the minute, too busy to look hard, so I turned to the index and began, scripturally, at the lowest place, and went higher till I stopped, second from the top, and turned to the page with the beautiful big letters: and when I realized that it

[1] *The Wayfarers.* [2] *Scribner's*, December, 1898.

gave Its name to the frontispiece — such a poignantly human interpretation — I was simply too pleased to do anything but dance and sing. I write much about it; but this happening has just served to keep me alive through what I *hope* is the last torment of blank silence due to Copeland and Day's *unheard-of* delay; enough to drive an author — especially a young one — clearly insane.

I hope you have managed to get some page-proof from them by this time, but it seems to me that they have been criminally negligent about the prospect of reviews.

How are you? And does the Christmas 'Book-Buyer,' crown your efforts? I have not seen it yet (we are snow-bound since Saturday), but I am sure it does.

Good luck to you!

Sincerely

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

What beautiful and enlightened man was it, do you suppose, who put me on that page? — That I may set him in my prayers!!

December, 1898. From a letter of H. E. Scudder:[1]

'I am sure the poems are not forced. . . . There may be almost as much straining after the natural as after the unnatural, and I beg you will not try too hard to pitch your voice to the vernacular. Now and then one is born with a poetic nature and is true to it by an unforced impulse; then it may be everything comes to life through some subtle transfusion of this spirit, and the voice stands apart with a certain singularity. I think it is so with you. This is something to delight in and simply to obey: not something to be vain of, and I am sure you will not regard your voice otherwise than as a beautiful instrument to be kept with care, but used generously.'

[1] This letter refers to *The Wayfarers*, published December, 1898.

To Horace E. Scudder

26 KING STREET
16 *December*, 1898

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

Your letter was well worth waiting for: thank you heartily.

The reference to that well-wishing adventurer, T. T., struck me happily, because I have long looked upon my little copy of The Sonnets as a mascot. May it be a good omen!

I am so very glad that you took the 'Envoy' earnestly, as I meant it. It was a word long-felt, but lately spoken; in fact, the last word, even as it is printed.

And I thank you for your trust just here. I think you believe that I *do*, above all things, long to deal intelligibly with *common* actualities, with real people, with typical human events (big words for a little quill!), and I think *you* see that the book does *not* shirk realities in so far as it knows them. But it is just because the spectacle of the grown world of men and women fills me with awe and unspeakable humility that I dare not pretend to any intimate knowledge of it. I cannot make up real life out of my head, and I never mean to. We go hand-in-hand, wayfarers two, and there is no way of escaping that knowledge, I believe, for one who seeks.

Yes, I have one special joy in the book, no matter how far it falls short of what I meant — and mean — to do. I think there is not a pretense in it. It's all made of things I really learned in myself (unhuman though it may be called — and has already, now and then). It is made of live years — very long ones they seemed to me; and so, though I cannot defend a thing on the ground that it was 'merely an experiment,' the whole book is dear to me, and almost painful — out of all proportion to its size and general appearance!

So, if anybody says to you, 'There are melodious bits here and there, but she will never do anything better: there's no human feeling in it' — you'll know better;

though you may very reasonably — and with my entire sympathy, too — say, 'I wish the child could have made her human feeling clearer.'

As to subject-matter, you know, I think I am realer as I am than if I had written a touching dialogue with a needy knife-grinder that I never saw; or than if I had made a War-song before Santiago, after watching the bulletin-boards (outside the 'Herald' office).

No, I haven't made up anything out of my head.

You could read between the down-hill lines on the fly-leaf of your copy, couldn't you? (I don't see why those things always have to happen on a fixed fly-leaf.) Grateful is a moth-eaten word. But there is no word to say my thanks for me. More helpful even than all your special criticism, I sometimes think, has been your constant trust, your hopeful way of letting me plan things, no matter how unwieldy, with never the smallest visible scorn for 'youthful efforts.' And it is so easy — and so usual — to abash a beginner by mistaking his endeavor for conceit. You were good enough to see how well a little vine likes a tall trellis; and I have always taken away from our talks the most comfortable sense of being trusted-around-the-corner, like a creature who was intended to grow. It is one of the rarest things I ever met, and I must tell you so now, if I have not before.

Oh, I realize that this little occasion for thanksgiving is no more than a christening. I know my dearly Belovèd may grow up to be anything but what I hope. But you know I'm happy over it, and I know you're glad that I am. And at this time, when I miss the people who might be — I cannot help thinking that my father would bless you for your long lovingkindness to his own.

Ever sincerely

JOSEPHINE

P.S. If you have really gathered back a little pleasure, after all these years, think how glad I am!

To Frederic F. Sherman

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
3 *December*, 1898

DEAR MR. SHERMAN:

I shall not require much urging to accept so lovely a gift, in spite of my very unsuspicious attitude of mind when I wrote. *Thank you*, a thousand times.

I trust that the book is out to-day, though I haven't been to town yet to see. I hope you will like it. I have been beside myself with suspense and various torments; but, now that I can see and touch the earliest handful of copies, I am as naïvely pleased — as I've always heard They are! Of course it is a Beautiful Book: the only doubt is — will that Beauty be audible, visible, lovable, to any but me? Time tells. And oh, what a long time, too! Remember that I'm mewed up, dogless and brotherless, in darkest suburbs, and if ever you *do* hear a good word of the book, tell it to me; will you? Man cannot live by bread alone. And silence is going to sound terribly loud.

Ever sincerely, and
with warmest thanks
JOSEPHINE PEABODY

P.S. When you read the book, don't skip 'The Wayfarers'!

To Frederic F. Sherman

26 KING STREET
16 *December*, 1898

DEAR MR. SHERMAN:

Thank you for a very delicate compliment and the greatest amaze that ever I felt.

It's evident that *you* are doing everything you can to further my fame! I beg you to believe that I am sincerely obliged to you. But I'd like much to hear what you personally think about The Book, and you haven't told me yet. Have you seen it? And did you show it to any one, and what did you do, and what did you say? See how

naïvely I'm supposing anybody did or said anything about this Eighth Wonder!! Never mind, 'twould be the silliest pretense to conceal my own devotion to the book; and my one rightful source of pride in it is that it contains not a single pretense.

Do write. Sincerely your friend

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

December, 1898. Good letters come straggling in, and ah! the Book is out. To-day I lunched with the Doctor, who would move heaven and earth to make everybody read the Book. I have been marvellously fortunate in one way all my life. No matter how lonely I have been, no matter how seemingly helpless my helpers have been, some of them, I have had a strange taste of downright worship at all times whether it is good or bad for me . . . it fills me with humility and the desire to fulfil, as nearly as human can, that hope and trust.

No matter how bitterly deserted I have been, — or seemed to be, — by one and another — there has always been left some one creature weak or strong, old or young, who kept alive that flame of the ideal that I long to be some day.

December, 1898. The boy [1] was made to be one of the prophets: His drawings say it clearlier than anything else could. There is no avoiding that young personality. You are filled with recognition and radiant delight. Great spiritual possessions. These you can see in every sketch and a perception, a native-born wisdom that is second sight. I bless the day I saw these things, for there is nothing that so warms one's heart and cheers the thoughts that are growing down in the dark as to meet one of these creatures who are dear to God.

December, 1898. This invitation to read [2] strikes my mind curiously as a chance. Just what kind of chance I'm not sure. There intervenes an abyss of fright, littleness, unfitness, possible dismay, and yet, if I can once overcome

[1] Kahlil Gibran.

[2] At the Boston College Club.

that, I might be able to do something for this book and future books and for my own idea of poetry. For we read too much with our eyes in these days; and both the matter and the manner of verse might be strongly refreshed by a return to the primitive medium of a rhapsode, a *joglar*, a singer sitting at the gate. . . . And if I could only once be sure of a steady voice and knees, besides a dauntless heart, I think it would make me very happy to say the poems out before people.

December, 1898. I long to make use of everything I have and I long to have more of everything. And yet I shall feel such a sense of shame and fury if I only succeed in smattering. Heaven knows I have no desire to do many things a little: but I desire to do supremely well something definite, expressive, new, as anything sincerely and deeply wrought must be: and I wish to work richly, recognizing everything else as a help. . . . The old problem, paucity of circumstance, unknowledge of the world — and a real nunnery point of view as regards men — all that remains.

To Clarence H. Blackall

26 KING STREET, DORCHESTER
2 *January*, 1899

DEAR MR. BLACKALL:

A happy New Year to you and to all of you! And it's I that am asking you right out loud, like a cheeky friend-in-need, if you will not please find a little spare minute to write me a word about the Book, and how you like it. *How*, *how* you like it; for like it you must and shall, if I can make you.

You see, 'tis my first, and because it *is* my first, and *because*, *because* it is a book of youth, I cannot wait to have my friends say something about it. Oh, but indeed I have had to wait, for many; and some I never shall hear from at all. But don't you be like that, 'cause it is more wicked than any one understands. They know not what they do.

I want to tell *you*, first of anything, that I desire to write of very different things (as the 'Envoi' says) and I wear my knees out, praying to be let out of captivity into a living world of men and women — people of all kinds, not people like me. For I dare not pretend things and until I touch and see the commonest, typical, human events, I may not write of them with understanding.

(Here the paper gives out, and I'm obliged to go on with remnants. Pardon.)

So, the Book has great lacks in matter as well as manner. But it deserves something, for all that; and I am unashamed. It is true. And it *deserves* to be beautiful, poor thing! I wish its inner beauty might somehow get out and touch people.

As for the crying need you mentioned the other day — 'tis true — almost, I think; maybe; perhaps; *Indeed.*

But now, are you utterly ignoring the III, in the group of Songs? And 'New Bloom'? Though more nearly like it are the 'Sonnet to the Unsung' and the 'Envoi,' to be sure! And Life's to blame for that. Not to blame, either. I think we ought not to blame Life for anything, till we get outside and see it whole.

After which eloquent defence of my own, I need hardly say that the Book is very dear to me, and I bless the Sun to think it's out at last! But I hope, indeed, for more and better poetry with every year. And I would speak of things more distinctly human; and I would use a clearer speech.

Sincerely yours

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

To Clarence H. Blackall

26 KING STREET
9 *January*, 1899

DEAR MR. BLACKALL:

Thank you truly for your letter. If you knew how much pleasure and encouragement it gives me, you would feel repaid.

'After Music,' you may be interested to know, was

truly written after Music. And whose but J. J. Paderewski's — the recital of February 11, 1893! I did not write this thing for two or three days after: the impressions the music left me went too deep for swift expression. But I believe that that Music, in its wholeness (the first set of recitals I heard), was somehow — in spite of books, in spite of pictures, in spite of everything before — the real Revelation to me of Art in its most vital, present, possible sense. The Beautiful, for once, stood near, close by, not as the unattainable dream of a Michelangelo or a Milton, but the ever-living Presence that must yearn over her lost and half-blind children, with their poor makeshifts for comfort and loveliness.

That overpowering homesickness for absolute Beauty as one's birthright — that opens one's eyes. The Music said to me, 'Come up hither, thou child, and I will show thee many things.' And I suppose I shall spend my life trying to find — Hither. Don't you suppose so, too?

Thank you for the letter.

Sincerely your friend
JOSEPHINE PEABODY

P.S. Oh! Did I tell you 'why I stray?' No, not yet. Do you remember a place in the New Testament which says, 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter'?

To Mary Mason

11 *January*, 1899

DEAR HIGHLAND MARY:

. . . I went, you know, to take Professor Marsh at his word, walk home with him, sit in his study and talk. It really happened, and a conversation extraordinary it was. I wish you had been there, *in*visible for your own greater delectation. I am still quite filled with wonder at the man for acting so manfully up to his theories, and giving such earnest thought and candid advice to me as a young 'artist' — even committing himself to the extent of using

that word. I did sit on the edge of my chair rather shyly for a time; wished my gloves off, and thought how eloquent smoke might make us(!). But he said a great many things, and warmed my soul by seeming to perceive how difficult it is for a Girl to get at life as it is, sometimes; and wishing that I might have a few minds of men somewhat older than myself on terms of real companionship with me.

As talk went on, I found a chance — and some slight need — to say a word for companionship among women. 'You doubt it?' said I. 'But it is true. I am often puzzled to find out, over and over again, what a wonderful spiritual *poise* women have, by nature, the best of them. Even when they seem fitful, superficial, uncertain, if you like, about superficial things. When it comes to the deepest realities, they are all at once revealed to you, sure, stable, reliable, deep and broad-minded, *wise*. And that, when men, whose daily life of business habits disciplines them more — gives them a superficial appearance of stability — sometimes turn out real spiritual "whirligigs."' (I really did say whirligigs.) Says he, with a troubled air, 'I hope you may show that to the world some day.' Says I, very meekly, 'I hope so, too.'

We talked of people as well as work. Oh, don't I wish you had heard it; 'twas so good and so droll at moments. And when I had to go, he went, too, and put me on a car.

Then I came home, to find that I had missed you; and to hear that you had been suffering from blues.

These thwarting criss-crosses!

. . . Good-night. Sleep sweetly. Take off all your anxieties, and pretend you're seven-times-one to-day. Pretend your angel tucks you up and smooths your hair for good-night, and promises to stay somewhere near. Pretend there's nothing in the world to be sorry for; and that, when you wake up, your mind will be all freshly aired and bloomy with early, mysterious walks in far-off places. And, as for you, you won't be a day older; you'll be starting out all new, with a rich twenty-four hours in your pocket, and days of all sizes and colors ahead of you, all different.

Dear me! — what on earth is so delicious as sleep? I should think the pure deliciousness of it would coax a *bon viveur* into the life of a child. — And, now that I think of it, 'twon't be night when you get this; and uninterested afternoon may move you to think How silly! and Why all this? I'm going to sleep, I suspect. That's why.

Good-night.

Yours

11.25 P.M. JOSEPHINE

To Mary Mason

26 KING STREET
15 *January*, 1899

DEAR MARY:

. . . And I'm as impatient as a six-year-old with a pot of paint to get a clear morning and elbow-room. Heaven knows how many big sheets of good manila paper I shall daub with absent-minded curly-ques (queues? — cues? — Q's?), how I shall nibble down the end of my pen, how I shall walk around the room and look out the window and yawn at space and smile at nothing, and hum and drum, and put my head out the door to say, 'Did you call me?' every now and then, and frown 'I'm Busy' if any one comes in!

Oh, Oh — what a process it is, getting to work! What to do next? I feel as if my Self were a strange, new, four-foot beast of unknown habits and probable hunger, ramping at the end of a long tether, and regarding me now and then with an eye potential as a buffalo's. (Now, who would think it?) But where to pasture, what to feed it on — whether to call in help; — *que faire, que faire?*

. . . Good-night to you now. I have seen the new moon, having backed all over the house, after my right shoulder, in search of it. So do come Wednesday. And now good-night to me and my buffalo.

Yours ever loquaciously

March, 1899. . . . A new phase of acquaintance with Wm. S.

I have never, till now, started reading the plays as plays, with my mind's eye directed consciously upon the scene as a scene: and it makes him new again for the fiftieth time. Inexhaustible. I have read him always as poetry, as People, as Wm. S. (whom I had to hear and see or die) as sleep, as exercise, as journeying, as the one thousand friends and as the one friend, as food and drink, more specifically as lunch, dinner, supper!

Always to the rescue . . .

Yesterday I noted out the scenes and acts for new acquaintance' sake (eye on stage) of 'The Tempest,' 'Merchant of Venice,' and 'Twelfth Night': reading the second with a tremendous sense of freshness (for I've never seen it acted, or the others either) and getting so uproariously jolly over 'Twelfth Night,' the old joy, that I could hardly make up my mind to go to bed.

To Mary Mason

Monday, 13 March, 1899

DEAR MARY:

. . . This is to announce to you, as a confidential friend, that I made all the Bread for the family last Friday; and how I did hope to see you come driving down, somehow, some when, that I might stand over you while you ate it and saw that it was Very Good. Now! White and graham! Both kinds; and biscuit, too, on Saturday and Sunday; and curled-around roll things. (Can you make those? 'Cut into strips eight inches long — ' but I won't tell.)

Everything was 'quintessentially' eatable. If you don't believe it, I shall have to send you samples next time. From this to whole roast-ox, march-pane, swan-patés, and barbecue will of course be one simple step. *I am a cook.* I think of taking the work and running this house on the European plan. Don't you think it would be a good idea?

Soup — 20 cts. (Mamma, Marion, Miss Reynolds, and

Grandmother: 4 × 20 = 80 cts.) One order with one plate, 10 cts. extra; and so on. There's money in this. *En avant*, Cooking! À cupola, Literature: you are lovely but you lead not to glory — in the suburbs.

While I have to reside in the Iron Stove (until I am set free from the bad spell), I believe I'll use the stove. Happy thought! — Stationery comes to an end. — But some other things last.

Yours

JOSEPHINE

Love to all of you.

April, 1898. Yesterday I read to the College Club, as I promised weeks ago. . . . It's a curiously enlightening experience, reading your own things to people who have come to hear them. It shows you the work from such a novel and at the same time exceedingly practical point of view. Wherefore I'll set down for future reference certain facts.

Regarding the substance of my longer things, it takes an audience too long to get into a clear relation with what I have to say. The power of holding their attention depends for a time too much on personal matters — voice and so on. If I happened to be looking quite homely, for instance, or if my voice gave way, they wouldn't listen — which is bad. If I can only get to thinking about more direct fundamental 'functional' things. That fatal injunction of all well-bred elders, 'Don't point,' brings forth some bad results, I can't help thinking. We imply or try to imply indirectly too much.

2) Poetry was meant to be read aloud; and until it is regarded as a thing primarily for a narrator, a *jongleur*, a *diseur* or *diseuse*, it will continue to be afflicted and overgrown with literary-isms. The *live* stands apart from the literary in the clearest possible manner, when you hold the book and try to let other people know what is in it. . . . The latent humor of some things can never appear at all unless they are read aloud.

April, 1899. As usual we greeted each other with

whoops of inexplicable mirth and alternately talked and babbled all day. It is funny, our aims and our methods about the same things are entirely different: natural temperaments likewise: tastes in many respects quite alike. We are an utter contrast in some large ways: but in moods of jollity and in a queer capacity for living within the minute when we feel like it, and being inexpressibly happy-go-lucky on small provocation, we are absolute twins. I have never met any creature whose natural hilarity so chimed with mine, or whose moods had such lightning communication with mine. No matter what we have been up to, the instant we see each other, broad leisure fills the air like the smile of the Cheshire cat! Everything relaxes into potential drollery: and yet the serious word never suffers distortion for an instant: there's nothing strained, or out of place.

The wildest capering and nonsense on my part, I know, could never for a second ruffle her belief in and clear view of the seriousness that exists somewhere at all times if it ever exists at all: and so with her. Which makes our fantasticalities and huge stretching laughter freshening in the truest sense.

I think we are very lucky to be able to strike this Forest of Arden gaiety wherever we are. And we have spoken of it and hugged ourselves over it for several years.

April, 1899. W.S.'s Day. 23rd April. A. F. B. and I had a novel time together. Cider failed us. But we set forth my pet volumes of Wm. S. and lighted candles and caught a rainbow with the crystal; and dipped our glasses of Angelica in it and drank to him silently. Moreover, we had each a sonnet to offer, mine a hoarse and haggard tribute (but quite Genuine, as Cambridge says). A. F. B.'s very cunningly compounded in his praise, of lines all taken from the Sonnets.

To Abbie Farwell Brown

27 *April*, 1899

DEAR 'LOCKS:

My heart would feel quite low if the sun didn't shine: 'cause I can't come this afternoon. My hustling, omnipresent mamma had a dressmaker engaged for me to-day, 'n' won't let me have the afternoon out. Likewise the 'ouse is being painted, and all hands are required on deck. No seclusion, no shutters. No eyelids. Dress in a glass house. . . . Take care what you think about. Legs and ladders to-morrow, and to-morrow and to-morrow. I 'spect spring cleaning begins then, and I shall have to take my Play to Franklin Park and write it with the aid of a pencil stub and buns and Moxy. (Moxie? Moxey? With heigh! the Moxy over the dale!) I do intend to write it. I'm scribbling snips of scenes (between Himself and various others) evenings (rate ten words to seven dashes and three thousand polka dots), but I've thought of one or two rather uproariously good points for curious action in the dialogue. And the Dark Lady becomes so vivid in my mind that I only have to watch her to hear what Devilish Wile she tries next. W. H. is not so clear to me — but I haven't fairly scrutinized him yet. (O, that I knew more of bear-baiting!) Say, I'm beginning to pull your ears a little, about this; for it would certainly help so much to catch one whiff of Stratford air, to see the Tower. But no, I take it back. The writing of it shows me 'tis not true. 'Tis a snippy, dronish complaint. How many of Them ever saw anything like the things they wrote of? I ought to be thankful for Chambers' 'Book of Days'! And I am.

. . . Want a kitten?

Kittens! Kittens! N-i-i-ice Spring Kittens: all Fresh! Three for a quarter. — Three *with* a quarter: 'n ol' Rags, 'ol Bottles! (Oh, pink-nosed exquisiteness, that the times should so press upon us.)

Say, come out any time, any morning, and stay to lunch.

Maybe *I* could come to lunch next Wednesday — as I mean to go about clay again next week.

Say, write. Yours

WING

April, 1899. I'm making up my mind, these days, to go ahead and write the inevitable amount of blunders that I have got to get through before ever I make a Play. I omit to say *If — I Ever Do At All*, because I seriously believe that it lightens one's impedimenta to begin by throwing all the reasonable doubts and deprecations out of window at the start. I believe I have boasted a little now and then that I won't let the fear of making a donkey of myself stand in the way of works: but I believe I have been afraid. Where are the works, anyway? Go to the ant, thou sluggard. Make up your mind that you are going to be ridiculous a few times at the least, and the sooner it's over the better. Go at it, if you write reams to weep at the next morning, and start again. I swore that I would make a start on the 23rd, and I did jot down the characters as far as I saw them, in a one act that I've longed to write about — who but Wm. S. — only he isn't named by name (I have so much grace). 'Twas his birthday and Saint George's Day and Sunday: and the lesson for the morning gave valorous advice to beat your ploughshare into a sword and go ahead. 'Let the weak say, "I am strong."' That's always what the Old Testament tells you to do. I don't see why it may not accomplish much i' the arts.

May, 1899. Finish the first rough draught of the play. Am doing it according to a whim, in every spare moment. This draught of it is written at full speed for character and movement. Next it will be written through for high lights in the situations and the final proportion of the speeches; lastly for language.

To Frederic F. Sherman

5 May, 1899

DEAR MR. SHERMAN:

Many thanks for the clipping. By this time I have a collection that is enough to make me laugh or moralize for an hour at a time, whenever I choose to look it over.

I hope you are writing verse. I am — scrappily — when I get the chance. House-painting, a prospective sale of our house, and various domestic distractions do not help: but I keep a dogged clutch on the collar of my Idea (yes, 'tis as prosaically determined as that), and add point to point when the moment serves — even on the back of a visiting-card, in an electric car! O delicate Ariel, what a life! If fidelity has any reward in this life, I shall hope for better things. Wish me well, as I do you.

You know you are writing poetry: Springtime and She leave you no way out of it.

Sincerely yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

June, 1899. I have never regarded death with much patience — or even imagination. There is a pagan element in me that suffers and refuses to be comforted. And I have often said that willing as I have felt to die, more than a few times, in the past five years, for a moment, I should be angry and rebellious to die *very* young, without having done anything of all I hunger and thirst to do and to prove.

June, 1899. It's the dearest place I ever owned[1] and I *am* so glad to have a quietness to get into. Here a plant can draw the breath of consciousness . . . a place for visions. They will come yet. You will never get me to believe that this feeling of special grace at special times is all a matter of imagination and animal spirits. I feel a sweetness pouring down on my head — a sense of intangible communion and confidence with all the enlighten-

[1] Her room — The 'Bower,' Linnæan Street, Cambridge.

ing powers that is like naming a tryst with question and answer, assurance and reassurance.

'You are here: I feel you! O I know you. I can touch you. Be here.'

'I am here.'

'Be here always.'

'The place I know. Do I forget?'

'Nay, but I — let me remember always. Be here, be here and teach me to listen and let me see. Don't let me forget.'

I have stars and I have moonlight. I have the uttermost thoughts of the tree. My riches almost scare me.

June, 1899. . . . A wide streak through him of the unquenchable childishness that I feel in me — the thing that you recognize at once in another's face, and smile at, broadly and securely; the kind of creature you could sit beside, on a seashore whole hours, with your feet sticking straight out in front of you absurdly and talk with or hold your tongue with or 'say your prayers to' or say Boo-boo to, with equal serenity.

July, 1899. I kept at it all yesterday and managed to get a little more articulate by night — filling out first draughts of 'Resurgam' and 'In the Doorway' and 'The Silence' to put them away for a day of clear vision. 'Tis funny how, between two longer things, a scrap of a cadence gets going in your head till you turn aside to a scrap of paper and scribble down an unexpected tune in parenthesis. Ah, how good, how deliciously good, to be saying anything again, no matter how rudely.

August, 1899. . . . It has been a happy working time. . . . I have written *at* things with a dogged faith and I have amused myself off and on, with little games and tricks that go to help one technically.

I think it is a good practice, this (so long as you regard it as a game) — to play with rhyme and rhythm and proportion now and then, and find out things. For you cannot help finding out things whatever you do, only provided you DO anything.

To Mary Mason

16 *August*, 1899

DEAR MARY:

I would have written to you of my visit much earlier than this, but I was much too busy writing in my own journal about it all — with red ink! You know just what it was like, you see — this visit; but I could not let a bit of it evaporate. I had to make sure of some plain facts in black and white to read over and smile at some day next winter, when the thought of a swim will make one shiver, and 'twill be hard to think that bay thickets ever did send out such a warm breath; and the little hills will miss us, I am sure.

Didn't we have a good play-time? I have my journal annotated (in Red Ink) on this plan: Mr. Huss plays (violin sonata): Dan plays (Elegy): I play (Play): the children play: we all play (Hearts): Mary's turn: Dan's turn: H. H. H.'s turn: my turn, etc.

It was a rare few days, quite wonderful with talk and music and comradeship and happy listening; one of the pervasive joys that *count* out of all proportion to the time of their happening. I was most unwilling to come home — drew sighs more and more frequently between Boston and Cambridge, counted the difficulties that beset all my undertakings, and could only conscientiously say that I was very glad to see my dear mother again. Yet I fell asleep, that night, in one of those funny parentheses of unearthly contentment, saying to myself, like a well-fed cherub — 'Ahai! I lead a happy life.' And then I had to laugh till I woke up. Do you understand? I don't. But I know that I sometimes find myself in such a mysterious inlet. I may have thought that I was struggling against wind and tide in the coldest, most unfriendly river — struggling for life itself. And suddenly I put my hands out softly, and it is all lilies, everywhere; and I am somebody particularly blessèd; and I feel some love shining down on the top of my head; and then I begin to laugh like a

baby. It sounds absurd: perhaps it is. And yet again, *Perhaps*. . . .

September, 1899. Still diligently cobbling. No lack of things to do. When head and eyes feel sluggish, I fall back on 'sliced animals' so to speak — building-blocks of rhyme, rhythm, proportion, and what-not. Building-blocks is a good name for this investigative pastime. And it pays to investigate too. Then, when the day of visitation comes, what ready resources! I don't know anything that should more reasonably cheer and companion an artist even in his fretful and dispirited moods, than the sense of that *solid* acquaintance with the *craft* part of it, as far as it goes — the honest sureness that comes of long love and experienced observation.

September, 1899. Check for 'The Quiet,' praise Heaven! The first money since last December. So I thought I must spend a few dollars of it for pure joy merely; and yesterday bought the Copeland and Day edition of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets,' enough to make your heart hop like a little hill. It makes them all new again. I'm feeling tuneful, these days, with new realizations. They come in tides. The latest have to do with Work and high hopes.

Let me set it down here that I believe an artist's motto should be, *Seek and ye shall find*. May slothfulness depart from me and may I live to prove how much of absolute Beauty waits and watches — the enchanted princess — for the daring heart and the zealous love to win and set her free.

It's no use talking — we have much in past American poetry to be very proud of, for the Spirit of truth and courage within it: but there is remarkably little that you can hold up beside the Mother poetry and say, 'It is Beautiful.' . . . I'm inclined to think some Puritan misconception of Beauty survives in a tendency to think of Form as a fair garment — desirable, but still a garment, instead of the Physical Being of the thought — the Word incarnate.

I always feel some sense of distrust, and scrutiny, when I hear a person speak of words as a trammel and of rhythm and rhyme as bonds. The sense of bondage seems so wedded to incompleteness of creative impulse. Say you want to write a Sonnet.... As I look back on my own experience — it was never when I had a clear thing in mind to be said that I felt any sense of faint-heartedness at the succession of rhymes that must be rhymed — never. Fullness of thought was the most loving-disposed circumstance toward the Sonnet form, of all circumstances that lead one to pen and paper. The only times I have found myself eyeing the octave-endings and the sestet-endings with an Hebrew eye, it was a question of spreading out a vague impulse on a form that called for an idea and, naturally, the rhymes gaped like a nest of empty sparrows, shrill and dismaying.

'There are things which never can be expressed,' quoth'a. Well and good. There are things which we never shall want expressed. They are more beautiful and real as essences. Leave that. But I say and I believe: that everything which it is desirable to express is expressible.

Expressible: not capable of analysis.

You can make a try at it and astonish yourself and other people, too, perhaps. If Keats' 'little noiseless noise among the leaves' does not express what it means — I am one-eyed. 'Cold pastoral' too. 'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter.'

Walk up, wiseacres, whose minds are too rich to share, and say if this man found words a bondage, metre a yoke, expression beneath him? Imagine Shakespeare (christened William) — and a busy man in his day — writing one hundred and fifty-four sonnets that demanded rhyme — when nobody was going to pay him for the same — only a practical publisher (rest him, gentle thief — best of thieves) to bring out the work without his knowledge.

Well, then, why have we been so content to leave Form unexplored: for it does seem to me that speaking generously we have done very little, very little towards the richest

expression of noble ideals, the loveliest physical development of the belovèd child. And so to put it shows what I mean — to give the mind of your ideas the Body that shall be its perfect reflex, its noble instrument, the eloquence of Beauty (that he who runs may read) and vigor and grace and power to grow, yes, and to re-create, to beget.

I do not think Americans have been very diligent in this; the signs of it are not apparent in their work save in one or two instances of exquisite art within a very small range, self-imposed limits, it would seem. And how can an artist enlarge his technical resources too much? He should spend uncreative hours in patientest investigation (if only by half moments), in happy-go-lucky games with building-blocks — he should train his ears to consider the eloquence of daily sounds, the rhythms of trade and crafts; to simplify the complexities of things written and things said and things unsaid. He should have a thousand new rushes to spread before the Belovèd when she comes, and never show her a chamber sparsely sprinkled with sand.

To Mary Mason

30 *September*, 1899

DEAR MARY:

. . . I regard Kahlil Gibran's drawing, above this desk: and last night I transferred it to a little peg beside my bed, where I should see it as soon as I woke up: and perhaps it will help me to keep a grasp on my Identity (which is to say — 'what God meant when he made' Posy Peabody).

Now this is written, it sounds tragical; but you know it isn't. 'Tis only — as you likewise perceive and understand — that sometimes the most natural, everyday, unimportant bustling and rustling and helter-skelter and matter-of-course alarms you, somehow, and you feel frightened and besieged: and you can't say so, for nobody around you understands Dutch. . . .

October, 1899. To save as we live is utterly impossible.

And when M. L. P. and I think we can save and ought to, Mamma won't. Her well-regulated housekeeper's pride suffers positively mortal bitterness over things that we don't think of twice, owing to the sheaves of Bohemianism in every artistic make-up.

Appearances — appearances — appearances! Our bogy till death. Little remnant of a family that we are, we cannot split up, and we cannot be stubborn and eccentric by ones in the same household. We must cling together, keep up traditional appearances, look thoroughly presentable, and answer all Philistine demands, while the moneys grow less.

I am surely put to it to know how I shall ever get any experience. You read of dramatists writing a play, with a certain actor in their eye, going to see him, night after night, and dogging dress-rehearsals. While I go to the theatre once in two weeks as a treat, these last two winters, and see the one play once. And now, when I'm planning to go often and sit in the Nigger Heaven I feel a vague sense of criminality — that I shall be going *alone* to see it, even from such an undesirable perch.

October, 1899. I made a discovery of small size, surveying my dated list of verse (a kind of running account of poetry from the year 1889!). Beginning the survey with 1891, entirely lyrical in the strictest sense, I found that from 1892 the verse shows an inevitable tendency to split up into some kind of dramatic form; either monologue or some kind of lyrical colloquy. The longer things almost invariably speak for themselves or else show episodic ('Woman of Three Sorrows,' 'Shepherd Girl,' 'The Little Singer and the Birds,' and so on), while half the lyrics run into two voices, narrator and Passer-By; question and answer: concrete experience replying to abstract querist: over and over it happens, with the suggestion of movement interrupted by speech. Very few of the poems *stand still*. There's almost no plain narrative: no study of a picture: something is always going on. And it's the cosmic background of a turning world and stars passed by that

the 'Book-Buyer' rather objected to. I see it myself; but I don't know whether to object or not. In fact I can't object very usefully, because it was so unconscious and so true to what I said and felt. But it is a very decided tendency, that I see; and the instinctive turning of everything into some kind of dramatic form made me feel that perhaps I shall *find myself* most completely there.

October, 1899. O let me see some living men, not theorists, not book-worms, not essayists who never essayed anything.

I tell you the Psychology of the Crowd has an unknown spiritual quantity that has never yet been stated. And crowds may knock my hat over my ear, hold me prisoned for an hour, lift me by force of elbows, and comment on my personal appearance. Short of broken bones, I will not complain if the crowd is out to reassure the eyes with the spectacle of splendor in a Man. Good Crowd; poor Fellow! Like a tremendous, indiscriminate, adoring dog. If we jump up and shake the mire over you joyously and split your ears with demonstrations, and lick and gasp and all but knock you over — it's just the inexpressible enthusiasm of a Creature: and you should take it for the love it is.

October, 1899. . . . When, when, when, shall a whole group of people — even three — begin to perceive the long length of journey between a-habit-of-good-behavior (partly inherited, partly a matter of taste) and the Will-to-be-Beautiful and to see Beauty in others.

O it is the dull ugliness — the stingy decency of people's conduct that makes you homesick — the consciousness ever bent on things not high, not lovely, not pure, but only of good report. Idleness, idleness, idleness, slipping lower and lower — into merest curiosity and the automatic diligence of an animal, busied with its house and food: when Beauty — significantly enough — always astonishes first of all; — has to stand for a good moment on the threshold because nobody knows who she is at first glimpse: and on departing leaves a faint suspicion of fantasticality

behind her. Nobody thinks of her as quite a comfortable thing. . . .

Oh, when shall I say it? When shall I make anything clear? When shall I say it and make it heard?

But I will just go on digging. For I know how wonderfully and how silently the day of visitation comes: and I cannot think that these things I desire to say will be lifelong prisoners in me.

November, 1899. Comforted last night by the Symphony which reassured me a bit as to possibilities of self-education.

Beethoven's C Minor Piano Concerto (played with exquisite taste by one Heinrich Gebhard) and Bach Chaconne in D Minor were the best of it: but I enjoyed half of Glazonnoff's 6 Symphony very much, particularly the second movement.

And, anyway, it is an unspeakable help to me to hear such music: it clarifies my ideal, by setting a standard of Beauty. Do you see? And to feel with clearness what you are to aim at is surely the only true possession of any student. The work, in every case, he must do himself. So I won't be discouraged by my solitariness in my work. For as long as I have eyes to see and ears to hear, I shall from time to time, be able to find some touchstone. And for the rest, keep a stout heart.

Do you want to write a certain song, J. P.? Very well. First, know what you wish to make understood: as for how-to-say-it, think of clarinets.

November, 1899. I am always being refreshed with manna on a sudden when I find myself in such a terrifying desert. It blesses me and makes me laugh at the same time — happily — because I seem to myself so inconsequential. This sense of spiritual refreshment in the very face of a threatening to-morrow. . . . Went to bed early, while it stormed outside, with a sense of eagerness to have a long night half wakeful for the sake of the rested consciousness. And did so. It was cold, but I warm and well tucked up. The shades, half up, let in upon one wall a drift of light from the electric down the street, shaken by the

storm, and touching into rosiness strange at night — the roses there for more than a hand's breadth. And the beating of sleet against the panes only made me rest serener. So, all night long, I thought placidly, or rather looked toward the vision with quiet eyes, and slept and woke, woke and slept, enjoying the sleep as if it were resting my cheek, merely, against something too beautiful to see and understand, enjoying the waking for the sake of the sleep.

I do believe that the sweet physical reward of trying to do well is just this thing, though I sometimes wonder if my faults ought not to bother me much more constantly. I never mean that I don't do ill and disgust myself enormously when I feel like saying, 'Oh, I feel all new: my conscience feels so bright and shiny — I don't know why.' But with me, after a fit of intense repentance an hour long, I feel literally forgiven, and after that, digging up old sins seems to me an affectation or else disease. I feel 'clean' and I would go 'walking and leaping and praising God' . . . it is the clearest joy to me to feel it like a kiss on my forehead.

To Mary Mason

6 December, 1899

DEAR MARY:

. . . Wasn't Clara Butt's recital a treat? I have heard her severely criticised ever since: but I am so glad that I Have a Mind to Enjoy things; and there was such a splendid amount to enjoy. One may quarrel with programmes and methods, if one wants to; but I praise Heaven first of all for *large*, generous, native-born gifts; and the woods are not full of them. I never heard a voice so *poured* forth; whereas I have heard some exquisite high-art tricklings, and a great amount of song, duly proportioned, neither deep nor wide, but suitable for little social occasions, just like the cup that cheers but not *inebriates*.

Yea, I am furiously occupied with diggings all around the subject I'm going to write about next: and a mass of social doings that must be done, just now, to get them out

of the way. But I hope for much work, even out of these coming weeks. . . .

December 17, 1899. I see as I look it over again, how far right he [1] is about its language. In spots it is as clear as hammering could make it. But very often, in the effort to keep to the vernacular and avoid poetry for the mere verse's sake — I have paraphrased my thought with all manner of uncertainties and qualifications and monosyllables that don't mean anything, only serve to break up the line. These futilities are clear to me, now that somebody with opinions has pointed it out to me. And he warned me, too, against relying overmuch on the psychological effectiveness of an idea. Events must crowd. Alas! That staggers me: and it is the quarrel that A. R. Marsh foretold would be my vexation. For I am inclined by nature to want to see all my people very clearly at the start and then just let their relations develop without forcing a single event. And a playwright mustn't be a Quietist certainly. 'Tis funny. I did not know I possessed the smallest kind of individual theory about the drama as a whole, till I ran up against this natural impulse and wish — wish — wish. It's a hateful thing that one should have to fill up the outlines with physical incident; and, yet bodies must have something to do: and as soon as I say to myself any great actor's name and slip him into the part of my man in the play, I feel the almost hopeless absurdity of trying to give him anything adequate to Do; anything that a man would *want* to do: for I know so hopelessly little about live men, real men. . . . And yet, the first and last of all my working theories is to have faith even as a grain of mustard seed. Clearness, clearness, clearness. Try, Jan; Try, Josephine Preston Peabody; Try, Drelin, Drelin; Try, Posy; Try, all of you together.

January, 1900. . . . It feels very queer to be so openly admired: but thankful as I am for such good looks as I possess, off and on, or seem to possess, for that's more like it,

[1] Professor Grandgent in comment on *Fortune and Men's Eyes.*

I'm not sure that I think it's wholly agreeable to feel eyes fixed constantly upon you for a whole evening, when they only seem to go skin-deep. I found myself saying a funny prayer that must have made cherubim giggle; it arose from such a mixed consciousness of perturbation, astonishment, glee, and dread of something, I don't know what: — like 'O Lord, Thou knowest that I should love to be beautiful, and that I am thankful whenever I seem good-looking; but please let my spirit wax and grow beautiful and shine through like the moon, so that people will see that, rather than the other' — which was making a great fuss about one occasion. But it is the queerest thing how my Good Looks come about. For the woods are full of girls of real Beauty, born with them and come to stay; people taller, larger, with features that are lovely in themselves and high health to stand by them. And why I should have come to have positively a reputation for good looks is more than I can understand. For I have a quick sense of beauty and I should be glad enough to see it. Sometimes it is as if I had put on something magical which makes me seem lovely to people when I'm not; for it is plainly a kind of glamour unlike; an all-over shinyness of some kind that goes on and off like a robe. I positively believe my faithful diet of fairy tales has told upon me, for simple as my life and little as I have seen, the common things of life happen to me always in an extraordinary manner; and when I meet with a day of good-will, it pours all over me in an enchanted rain.

February, 1900. In the evening W. V. M.[1] appeared, armed with a whole box of cigarettes for to hear 'Fortune and Men's Eyes,' for I had put off reading it to him once or twice because he had nothing to smoke; and I dreaded that un-mellow mood of masculine idleness. So, after nine o'clock when we were safe from other callers, I read it out to him while he smoked and smoked. And to my great relief and true astonishment he was impressed; yes, very much, I think.

[1] William Vaughn Moody.

'There is absolutely no question about it,' said he, when he spoke. 'You've done a stunning piece of work, Josephine. No one could help liking it, there could only be degrees of liking. I should say it would act, too' — which pleased me to pieces; and a nice large manly slice of appreciation it was.

To Mary Mason

36 LINNÆAN LANE
27 *March*, 1900

DEAR AND GOOD-LOOKING MARY:

. . . Isn't my Mrs. Barnard a little young Gray Angel? I love to look at her. She brings out a dew on my heart every time I go there, and we sit and shine at each other, while we talk to people. I artlessly 'spect *one* reason why I love her is because she somehow loves me. I don't know why she does it, but I think I believe she does, and it is nicer to believe it than not.

This is the heavenly thing about feeling yourself loved. You shine back at people. I think it is only to the vision of Love (Belief) that such Transfiguration is possible.

This is a great discovery, my Dear. Just try (as of course you do) looking at people with this Star in you calling softly to the Star in them, and see — and feel — a something luminous that shows you how Beautiful we are all meant to be.

(This poor thing is a Poem, some day. Just now, as much like one as a naked squab is like a singing swan.) But oh, I mean what I say; and it is the central law of deliverance for the universe, as I believe. And the more I live the more clearly I see it. And once in a while, what a happy time I have inside of myself, looking at a Creature — old or new — and thinking '*I Shine at you. I Shine at you!!*' — till it really seems as if a moon ought to be unnecessary when *I'm* around. (Do you suppose it ever actually gets through the dull outside? Watch me some day — while I regard you — and see.)

Yours

P.S. 'I shine at you' means a Blessing, you see. Only it is the truth of it, instead of just *wishes*.

It feels like a kind of passion of *light*, a force of Radiance. . . . But I am sitting upon a star, this evening, I don't know why: — 'I-don't-know-why' is the dearest variety of happiness: — perhaps Blessedness is a better name. Here's some for you.

March, 1900. Reading the terrible 'Gadfly' last night . . . I came to realize with a new impetus toward work how passionately I do believe in the workman's conscience — and how bitter a wrong it seems to me to heap up human discouragement, the almost unforgivable sin.

If you are a creature born to gather and turn over in your mind human experience, for God's sake, give the positive crumb, the positive, the positive, the positive! Treat of faults and failures, hate, brutality, and despair; but keep the proportion of things. . . . The 'Gadfly' is one mass of unmitigated and unrecompensed suffering and it made me heartsick last night, to think of it falling as a last straw into the hands of possible hundreds at a crisis, and saying to their torment, 'Yes, it's like this.. There is nothing more.'

Art for Art's sake — good God!

It seems to me now that just here lies the choice for a workman between the life of Letters (ancient scarecrow) and the life of a Pioneer — art without a conscience, or art *with* a conscience, the spirit of the discoverer, the colonist, the maker of straight paths, the Builder! And here, yea, though I almost die with the physical longing for that which is very far off, for travel and sights and adventure in the smallest sense as well as the largest sense, and for a hand in events, a helpful part in the turning of the wheel — yes, here, my chance, paradoxical enough. The chance to be a discoverer in spiritual territory. . . . Yes, Solomon, — under the sun nothing is new — save the man. But every man is new; if he knows it. And it is that chance of spiritual heroism — that life of consecrated work and gal-

lant giving, that alone shall save us from a despicable career of pot-hooks on paper.

To go out, sword at side and song in your mouth, knowing and believing that Beauty suffers imprisonment in every human spirit, that she waits and starves here, that she is almost dead there; that often enough she is so spent and tortured and dark you would not know her: — to go forth unafraid, with the Beauty in your own heart longing after her — and to rescue, rescue, rescue, greet, restore; to stand unmoved when she will not answer to her name, unmoved but never dismayed — and gathering all the time, light, potency, renewal. Beauty from Beauty — that is what I would beg to do — that is what I will do indeed — God willing.

April, 1900. E. A. Robinson exhorting me to drop 'philosophizing' and twittering at infinities and to write about things objective. Want to, but how can I without being D——d pessimistic? (Pleasantness of even small decent things gone, because of M.'s continued depression, mental and physical) . . . I wonder how many years it is that I've had to down this quarterly rebellion. . . . It comes as inexorably as noon; and it's always the same, only worse — and it's always as hopeless as a Calvinistic hell. Positively the one sure fact of my objective world (and — ye terrestrial gnats — what an ache in the nape of my weary little neck).

To Mary Mason

36 LINNÆAN STREET
6 *April*, 1900

O MARY DEAR:

Come by all means, if you love us truly, and come as early as you can. Tuesday, the 10th of April! And stay late.

Such weather as this did you ever see? I have done nothing but walk. Well, yes — I had things to do, though. I've made a great discovery — How to Walk Alone and Be

Happy. I'm going over my Book, to revise where I may! I put in my pocket (and take out to refer to) a list of the *Contents;* and I walk and walk and say and hum over the things aloud — when there's no one about — to put them through that final test of Out-Loud-ness. I got through with everything but the long poem yesterday! And since that's blank verse, I 'spect 'twill make my memory ache: to say nothing of 'Fortune and Men's Eyes.' Wouldn't you laugh if you met me suddenly, talking poetry to myself, and flourishing that innocent list of titles in one hand?

O Spring, Spring — what tricks she does play on 'the lunatic, the lover, and the poet.' I 'spose each one is a compound of the three. Food for thought.

Yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON P.

May, 1900. Working before sunrise of a heavenly day, I went across the room, almost sleep-walking and saying to myself, 'I want a message for my birthday.' Half dreaming as I was, I opened the Bible and read what my finger touched — it was this verse in the Song of Solomon: 'Thou that dwellest in the gardens the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.' And it struck through me deeply.

July, 1900. Sail was glorious, glorious. . . . Héjà! all ye unfortunates who miss the topmost glory of physical life on this planet, I am very, very sorry for you. I had a gorgeous hour of swoops and dips and tugging that made me flap my hands over my head to their amusement.

August, 1900. . . . Aware how often ever since I was born have I been housed with praise — bowered — covered with leaves and flowers and petals: Heaven knows why. No Cinderella of any story was more adorned from time to time by friendly hands with unwonted things beautiful. It is an ever-recurring surprise and refreshment in my life, and it makes me utterly forgetful, for the time of wonder, of the recurrent solitude and hurts.

. . . What of the people who have lived through their

youth, their trials, their lonelinesses, their bereavements, without admiration? I seem to myself almost despicably inexperienced when I think of the great undeserved solaces and inspirations that I have had in this way, everlastingly bidden up higher by some one's ideal of me (often enough a far more helpful thing than understanding which the young are always crying after), compelled to see where I needed building most, when so many have no clew to themselves — struggle it out without hope or enlightenment. And then, the thousand unclassified gladnesses of kindly looks, in all places, houses and streets, like rich flowering weeds around one's feet. The pleasant passport that almost always gives one the freedom of the city — that mysterious blessing of finding that you *almost* always attract good-will . . . I do feel it a constant gift of manna.

August, 1900. Some section of my mind shows unexpected life these few days. It isn't very conscious, but it clutches at ideas and says, 'Hold on to this; it's worth keeping.' Hey! look at that! Will wonders never cease? O most eatable mushroom! Brave plantain leaf, however came you here? What's this? I find that people walk on two legs. I never realized that before . . . Oh, what food for thought! O how rich I am! My room is strewn with feathers. Angels have been here!

September, 1900. . . . I am devoted to —— and he to me. In spite of many things, I could talk to that man as I could talk to few people I've ever met. He's like a February day — just ignore the walking; — how heavenly it is overhead!

September, 1900. . . . 'Perennially Astonished One.' It's true. My objective mind is always astonished at the latest happening; everything is new to it.

My subjective mind (everything Overhead) I have always felt to be beyond amaze: never surprised in the world, never. What's here?

I seem to see J. P. P. the objective, like an infant exploring the sand, run back to the original — ultimate — Me, whatever it is — Me — holding up shell and weed and

starfish, with rapturous awe and wonder and discovery; 'See this! See this! I found it! What is it? Was there ever anything like it before?' And I smile at her, merely. Because I seem to have known from the beginning, all that she can ever find, and very much more. I share some indefinable knowledge of everything.

September, 1900. Yestreen, for the first time since I was a small child, I went in bathing without a stitch on. . . . It was moonlight, and softly windy, and the water just cold enough. Ahai! The deliciousness of wading in, feeling like a new child and stretching out your arms on the water, and the sea reaching beneficent arms for you — and slipping off into that fresh, exquisite rocking buoyancy. . . . Such a curious rapture as all Simplicities bring.

September, 1900. . . . It must be that I don't do my work in a grown-up enough spirit: else it would be less joyous to me. Surely it is not usual to feel this sense of continual joyous recompense and vivid deep happiness in the work itself and all its processes. The hard things are all outside of it. . . . No matter what the digging and the drudgery may be, it is good to me, every bit of it. The dirt turns gold dust.

October, 1900. . . . only to think of it makes the wonder and the joy bubble up in my heart, till my whole body should be full of light. These manifold feelings of some strange delight that freshen me so often — I wonder why they freshen me so much oftener than other people, and I wonder how to use them most potently.

I spent a quite sleepless night again . . . it brought richness of its own; the curious fantasticalities of night-thinking; and the clear, far, lasting trueness, so it seems, of early morning vision. I have noticed, many times, that the real Ideas that become plain to me towards morning are of the permanent sort. One's creative mind seems to be set free in a strangely large sense: the phantasmagoria go: the minor picturesqueness of dreams is lost: the ghosts fade (so hallowed and so gracious is the time); but there comes back your own larger Spirit walking the

hills, uninvolved, unyoked by Time, and beautiful as one bringing good tidings.

It was so, years ago, that I thought of 'The Woman of Three Sorrows,' the clearest instance of these workings of mind and spirit. For I had vaguely philosophized about those things for some days: but this night, in a dark dawn, I woke and sat up suddenly and seemed to hear Myself talking to me, and telling me a parable. All these little findings and puzzlings of the younger objective creature who had been thinking (fitfully) seemed to resolve in an element — call it the Morning Sense: why isn't that a good name for the Subjective Insight that comes, on the the border of daytime?

So this other night of waking, I thought of all things — all my mental spheres funnily working together, with pictures and plans, practical and theoretical, from drama to cake, from person to person, from day's projects with two hands through the concentric spheres out to the consciousness of God, and what He must want of me, and back again: till I was troubled and tired with the abnormal activity. And gradually, things simplified. I tried Waking (as I always try to make the best of it when it happens) serenely as if it were the most desirable rest for a young animal, and I just let my subjective mind play to me with its strange instrument and listened to it, half dreamily. And, oh, but it grew clear; it shook off the inconsequent colors: and it stroked my consciousness; somehow affected my spiritual sense of beauty with an impression like soundless curves of a large, large music: and the things that came to me then, the large simple outlines and suggested outlines, shook me with a kind of rapturous gratitude and watchfulness. . . . And when I rose up I felt fresh, fresh, as if I had been walking on the hills: after a long and weary night.

Indeed I do not prescribe Waking. But this was the curious recompense for that night. And it so happens, more or less vividly, many nights in a year.

October, 1900. O dear, O dear, O dear, I never did feel like a young person at a loss for things to say and think.

But now, somehow, I see that among other things I have the aspect of Woman; and Woman is a dangerous Creature inside and out. And I feel afraid of me.

I don't suppose I can spend my whole life treating all people with equal tenderness from the tops of trees! And 'tis anguish to think of being dislodged from the tree-top by any means whatever.

October, 1900. Yesterday, in great desperation over the *What Next* problem of my work (since I haven't money enough to go to the theatre more than seldom or do anything else that gives you practical experience), I made a Poseranian Puzzle game out of the Play, against scene shifting and revision. I cut dozens and dozens of little pasteboard pieces, and named many duplicates with all the names of the characters: other dozens of these blocks I marked 'Enter,' 'Exit,' 'Exeunt,' 'Re-Enter,' 'Discovered'; a few 'R,' 'L,' 'C,' etc., and 'Song' and 'Curtain.'

Thus, without scribbling and crossing out till I'm cross-eyed, I build up out of this sliced animal the scene-sequence (in French sense) and easily shift it about where I'm doubtful and get an excellent mental view of the dramatic values. For instance, all the stage-direction blocks were marked on one side in black, on the other in red ink, and where the 'Re-Enter' or the 'Exit' or anything else introduced a markedly significant element — an element of change changes the color of the scene literally, I put it red side up! This made me chuckle both with infantine and professional glee.

'Here — give me a red Re-Enter, Posy.' It was fun, though, and I find it both practicable and relaxing.

Oho, my dears, one needn't go unenlightened even if one has to learn without money.

I don't know that I envy anybody in America a closer acquaintance with the Enchantments and Lures of Poetic Form pure and simple. Lack of dramatic experience is a harder nut to crack . . . it is a trifle comic that a coming dramatist should go to the theatre for a treat so seldom in a dog's age.

October, 1900. First rainy days. . . . I get out the little cutting table and set forth thereon my doubtful acts of M[1] and go to scene shifting, by the light of my puzzle game. And behold it is very good (I think and hope). My plan of work is to Clarify, Clarify, Clarify. To get clear before my own eyes, exactly what I mean; and exactly what I want, out of it all: and thus to hammer and test every position of my chessmen, and trace coherent action for each one. Very absorbing it is: might be great, moreover, And so I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

October, 1900. This is the third day of rain: and it is delicious to hear it at night. Up in my room, under the roof, it gurgles and bubbles every now and then; and the exuberance of the soft sound is drink for one's spirit — body, too. All last night, I kept waking up on purpose and turning over to fall asleep again with a mind sweetly empty. Funny: when I was a child I never had an empty mind: never did I stop thinking: and I dreamed all night long. But now, often, often, in every day time, I feel as featureless as a snowdrift on a plain.

October, 1900. Saw the whole of the Poems yesterday and cracked my brain with correcting part of the Play for the second time and the first poems for the third time. . . . This to do through two neuralgic eyes: and have clothes made over meantime; etc., etc. Seamstress having disappointed dressmaker at last moment; Mamma laid up with sick headache. What would male (!) poets say, I wonder, over a sample day in the feminine household? But we shall never know. . . . I could not help being pleased with the things as I read them through, and glad of many, that it was I who said them. But I always feel dull and flat as a whole book, when I try to see myself with the eye of the public. It all looks tamer than a child's mudpie. I've lost a great deal in picturesqueness since 'The Wayfarers' too; by my very gain in directness and commoner phases of feeling. More strength, more grasp, more marrow I seem to see. But beyond that, I don't know how the

[1] *Marlowe.*

things will strike. For me, from inside, they are so illumined and warmed and veined, red and violet, with the curious new insights and earnings and experiences that helped to make them — that have been making Daily Me. And then I've feared to write too much out of myself, because there is much I feel like saying that sounds so foreign, and I don't want to make people wonder at me with anything fantastic, as they surely would. For I see that I personally am bound to seem fantastic, taken in glimpses. So much of my vocabulary is too special, from isolation and incessant whirr of thinking. (You perceive, J. P., that I can spike you with a pin now and then? Oh, yes, J. P., surely. But what does it matter to me, all this camphor on my little head? You don't know what I am. As for me, I take a nap and wake up ready for work. Are you through talking? All right. Come on, Wings.)

To Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
30 *November*, 1900

DEAR COLONEL HIGGINSON:

By this time you will have the book [1] I sent to you; and oh, I can't refrain my fingers from pointing to certain pages!

You know we were saying, one afternoon last winter, how often a creature's best-beloved work fails to mean much of anything to others. But I felt an indescribable sense of futility, when I read the pleasant praises of Mr. Chamberlain in the Wednesday 'Transcript'; though I ought to have known that his great love of out-of-door nature would lead him to quote a nature-poem, if any.

For the sake of consoling confidence, though, I do hope you will see in the little play something more than tenderness and reserve. For I know what I put *into* the play and the poems; and surely that same stuff is there, to be touched and handled and seen. This book was not made for the sake of music. I had a something positive to say, and I feel as if I had said it as directly as I can, so far. And

[1] *Fortune and Men's Eyes.*

I hope you'll see this something on pages 42 and 43, for instance, and 49, and all through the poems; and here and there (manifest) in the songs, of which I pray you to read 'The Stay-at-Home,' if you skip all the others.

You will say, 'This child pounds the pulpit-cushion distressfully.' Yes, it's very true. If 'delicacy' alone is to come from this volume, I really don't know what I shall do. — A very terrible and dark saying, as you see!

Sincerely yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

To Frederic F. Sherman

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
30 *November*, 1900

DEAR MR. SHERMAN:

By this time you have read the Book,[1] I hope, and liked it, I hope. And oh, I also hope that you and anybody else who speaks of it will say something for the bits of a *positive message* in it, the sturdiness of spirit which I hope is there; the something more than music.

May I point out to you, for sake of confidence, pet pages? The play really needs to be read aloud: and, if you read it aloud to your wife, I think you'll see then where the spiritual passion really comes out, I think, especially on pages 42 and 43 and the closing lines (49). I think I'm the little boy, Dickon, myself. Anyway, I love this little play, for its suggestion of broad background, and Oh, because I made it — you know how it feels.

Of course I care for everything in the book, but especially for 'The Source,' and those first four poems, and 'In the Silence' and 'The Stay-at-Home' (I hoped Sm. M. & Co. would send that to the 'Book-Buyer' to have it quoted), and 'The Belovèd.'

Well, please like as much as you can, my two friends, and take it with my warm good-will.

Sincerely yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

[1] *Fortune and Men's Eyes.*

November, 1900. To produce work for the sheer delight of the work to the artist and to shake off the influence of 'commercial literature,' that's the impulse of all true art. But I'm thinking of the many considerations besides commercial ones that alter our Selves for publication.

Certain it is that the great men of the world were men of the world in a large sense, and that they regarded the demands of their day and generation. So they should.

On the other hand, I believe that young writers . . . would be amazed to write their selves and their convictions down as they could if they might attain unto solitude for a leisure of weeks, regardless of opinions ancient or modern.

I for one! Solitary as my work always was, and constant, and wilfully regardless of money or any prospect of it, how seldom I have ever been able to 'get my voice out' with simplicity. How I have been beset with complexities, and intricacies, and the oysterish fear of exposing a raw surface to whatever might come. And how the experiences of feeling 'foreign' and of being called 'fantastic' have shut my mouth, or made me adapt my speech. If it were a case of convictions, of course, no hedging. But where it wasn't a case of convictions, how completely I have kept clear of everything like *abandon*, half from shyness, half from a Stoical resignation to the utter impossibility of being comprehended; again, from a Puritanical feeling that it is futile and therefore wrong to encourage 'specialness' in yourself — things that are not open to everybody's comprehension — largely speaking. But only when I realize that, do I realize the tremendous unreckoned Potentiality in every one of us — and the home of that rare bird Originality. . . . It seems to me that I've discouraged that in myself. . . . because the things said of my poetry made me feel that 'twas wicked to be 'obscure.' And besides getting my idea as clear as possible to myself, I painfully translated and translated and translated to other people. And often I feel, in my social relations with others, like a lame translation of an Ode. So seldom have I dared to be joyously Myself among others.

It's insidious, this sensitiveness, too; and it creeps into work sometimes along with thoughts of other minds. And while I still believe that a man must make himself intelligible to the world, I think I've tethered myself to a very mistaken degree; and I must see about letting the poor thing loose. . . . And when I think of the sense I have, good days, of wild unknown Tracts in my mind, full of wild and undiscovered things; — and the smell of Distances and the lure of ten thousand paths; and the maddening ungatherable bloom on hills and level and valleys, beyond, beyond, beyond — Original Me — where all things and creatures speak My language, and I hear and understand the talking birds and singing leaves, and prophetic waters — ahai! I stretch myself with the unspeakable leisure of a Tiger in the Sun.

November, 1900. There is a curious familiarity about the sense of suffering to me. Joy has always amazed me more, or rather, seemed a source of wonder, not as an ideal, but that it should ever inhabit the flesh. When I come to a dark place that must be gone through, I think, 'So, I've come back again,' and it seems to me I have known it all from the beginning. It is full of the dread of a well-known thing. The wonder is that it should still hurt so much. Joy is a kind of unexplored country full of tracts on tracts that no foot has known, no, not since the world was. There are thousands of kinds of new, new joy there for every living creature that ever was: and it's all fed from Light that will go on pulsing inscrutable new radiance till the stars drowse, and after. But sorrow is such an old, familiar, well-worn, common thing, full of humility. No new things in that Inn. You drink from the cups and goblets left by the guest that went before you. There are many, but all old and worn and full of humility.

December, 1900. Héjà! Sing-things begin to feel like a coming snow. Between schemes for the little Song-Book and the big Play, I could purr like the earth in August.

December, 1900. . . . I have lived by the spirit so long

and so fiercely that my flesh fails and my spirit is infinitely wearied and only pants for space. And it is true that I sometimes feel that I can hardly help dying 'to-morrow' from the terrible sameness of effort, effort, effort, without help or rather against the whole atmosphere all these years that I have been growing up. This is rather a prolonged complaint. But I know that I do not coddle grievances: that I have done my level best. . . . The cruel, appalling loneliness. Oh, if I can only expand — if I can only be Myself before I die, for every one's sake. I think I could work true works. . . . I can hardly wonder that people make light of my moments of low spirits (they are hardly moments in public) and ignore my utter exhaustion of body. For they don't count the years back, and they never look twice at another's visible circumstance: and how should they know of the anguish, the anguish that saps everything earthly that should make for joy?

But I couldn't help thinking — that the background, the environment of my home-life from eighteen to twenty-six has been made of the changes and transformations and effects of tragic evil, evil, evil, pain, dissension, nervous excitement, rebellions and despairs, bitterness, darkness. And against this background, pale beside the central fact of another's grief and wrong, the few — but to me disastrous — outlines of my own external life, forgotten by others, but to me as much as soul, heart, and hands could wrestle with and very difficult to understand.

December, 1900. The Twentieth Century has stood so long for hope, for wonder, for To-morrow's Triumph, that there is suddenly risen in me a deep joy that I was born at this time, old enough to realize something of what I may be and do; childish enough to feel that I belong with the youth of the century. I neither covet anything in earlier ages nor pine for time to be. I'm intensely glad of *Now*. And I am going to begin in other senses, too, if I can. I am going to hold to new watchwords — or, rather, to the ever-deepening reality of the old ones without compromise. Dare and Shine! Hope and Believe. Fear not, fear not;

fear not. Try for the highest hope. Have the courage to be Beautiful. Bring no shabby gifts to this new century. But let everything be clear, clear, without tarnish of half truth. Newness, newness; the desire of my heart — the constant joy of a fountain rejoicing. To be ever-new from the Source.

January, 1901. Good morning to the twentieth Century.

Héjà! I heard the trumpets at midnight: and I had a red rose with me, for the sake of having a Rose see two centuries — and for sake of all joyous nonsense. And I saw the morning stars. And I rose up again at 6.30 or thereabouts and to early church, walking all alone in the eye-beam of sunrise!

January, 1901. . . . I do not doubt I shall some day perceive that there was a strange gift wrapt up in the very blackest solitude and seeming cruelty of this struggle. If I can overcome it and keep bitterness out of my heart, and live above the lies and the treacheries I've met, I know I shall be glad then of all of it. . . . Ah, here is spiritual hardship, child. Don't hide your face from it. Here's pioneering. . . . Why is it, though, God, that if you want me to give people my message, beauty for ashes — why do you let my hands and feet be tied and my blood so stabbed out of me so that I have no voice left and my mouth is stopped, too?

The living shall praise Thee. But I am almost dead of want.

To Mary Mason

CAMBRIDGE
17 *January*, 1901

DEAR MARY:

Here is a little gift for New Year's. God knows why I send it — to most people such a useless thing; a crystal. But for me it meant things, and here are some of them:

It lets the light through, without shadow or speck or heaviness; but with continual great joy; the joy of a crea-

ture intent upon All-Light. It so desires the knowledge of absolute light that its Self is a clearness, just.

The day I bought it, merely to please my eyes and so give me a little wisdom, I was considering it; and it made me see newly this thing:

Truth is not mine: truth is not yours: truth is not the possession of any man who would have it and keep some. It is half-truth the moment a something of self would detain a part of it and say, 'Here is what I want: enough for me. I'll hold this: it is beautiful enough to be translucent merely.'

And here is the reason why, in order to see Truth and Light (and truth and light are God), we have to put self out of the question entirely. Vision will not abide a speck. If a speck of self gets between us and the light, it matters not to us at first; it only matters to the light; and it will only have cheated us out of All-Light in the hour when no lesser thing is any joy at all.

Therefore, therefore, I shall not dare to let my vision be clouded or colored with any manner of self-deception or persuasion, no matter how lovely it is, in a half-light. Because I should fear to cheat myself of All-Beauty.

There is no beauty at all in mechanical disregard of self, no beauty in merely going without things we want. Not with any belief that sacrifice is in itself a good, do I ever forgive, go without, suffer, return good for evil: but with eyes and ears attent and heart insisting upon helping out some Abundance of the Universe, that shall encompass my Present-Hunger. I must take my joy in some perfection that is silvering slowly (like this side of the moon); some fabric of divine-ness that is waxing and filling out, surely, little by little, though my hands are worn and hurt with the work.

Therefore, again and again, I shall not dare to let these threads of truth take any dullness as they pass through my hands.

I must have Truth, myself. I have wanted it; I shall want it more and more, perfect. I do not know what may

be revealed to me, from day to day, if I hold my heart clear, clear, clear, with awe and watchfulness and hope.

This crystal says to me, 'If thine eye be single' (pure) 'thy whole body shall be full of light.' And I say, Amen.

Yours with love

Have we not heard very, very often of the things that are 'too beautiful to be true'! But I never heard any one speak of the things that are not yet true enough to be beautiful.

Yours

Posy

February, 1901. I pluck up my heart by the hour, though: and between yesterday and to-day, I made a first draught of the first act of 'Marlowe.'

February, 1901. Great times with 'Marlowe.' I have got a first draught done through the third act, and while I am at it I feel equal to it. By the curious little Phœnix way I have of rising somehow from my own ashes, I should attain to something, it seems to me.

February, 1901. My Fourth Act, oh, oh, oh! It is a beauty. (Let us be praised by somebody!) I enjoyed myself with the unwonted tribute (for me) of an outburst of tears at the climax of it, from sheer delight. But oh, the stretch of time ahead, polishing, polishing, polishing!

This first draught of text consists of about 2250 lines of blank verse and five songs (three whole and two pieces of songs). How different 'twill be when 'tis done, I cannot say. But I pray the Lord my soul to keep. Now that the most desperate straits of construction are through with and it is all put together, practically, and the most dangerous points of the text by, I shall work upon it next as a great big Poem; out of sticks, straws, leaves, earth, lace, joy, blindness, anguish, death, faith, and the heart of spring.

To Mary Mason

February 11, 1901

DEAR MARY:

. . . Everything in the world has seemed preposterous for some time; and a little while ago I literally expected to die of it. But I tried my best not to, though I should have been glad and ready, were it not for mundane regrets at not having enjoyed more of the planet, and a ferocious wish to get my new play done. Considered as a human, however, I myself have a curious tendency to rise from my own ashes, like the amazing phœnix. And, whereas I got out my notes and set to work on the play (five acts, blank verse), feeling that I positively might not live to finish it, I was somehow miraculously fed from somewhere, even as I spent, with a lavish hand, every drop of color left in my mind. It distils from somewhere — like gum from the tree, it is surely from The Source, and nowhere else. And, after a week of tremendous scribbling, I find myself not only intended to live, again, but beautified with red cheeks and a hard-earned thing or two in my mind. Materialists may talk pages of eloquence: but I speak whereof I know. I have suffered the sense of death, in anguish, in exhaustion, in need and in solitude, many times, even in this short life: and nothing has delivered me but some God-Fact. I believe in God: I believe in manna. And I always come back from my desert — as far as I am permitted to come back — with the passionate wish to make real to others, to make *visible* to them, the great simplicity of it all; and the Substantiality of the Spirit.

If we could only, every night, put off with our clothes the mundane obligations of anxiety and pain, and have our minds vacant of everything but the world-filling breath of life; if we could — without intricate thinkings — dare to rest our cheek against some universal consciousness that I have just thought of a simple name for — the Will of God. People grow to associate 'the will of God' with everything that contradicts the human will: — disasters, crosses,

deprivations: a very sad spiritual squint. What is the Will of God but Ultimate Beauty, Perfection, Peace, Tenderness, Glory, *Radiance*, *Radiance*, Truth true enough to be beautiful? Nature is trying to fulfil the will of God, with her wonderful mind towards harmony, order, rhythms. And the Will of God is that all things shall be full of Love and Truth; we ourselves so full of love and truth as to become a part of the very fabric of divinity.

I wish we could wake up renewed, full-fed, as a child is fed from his mother; with no care how; but with bright eyes.

Eh, what a piece of wishing. I mean it, though, stoutly. And I wish you good-night now, for I'm going to try it.

Come out when you can.

Lovingly yours

Posy

February, 1901. Thank God for a tide of cheer. I think it must have turned Saturday, for Mr. Barnard . . . thought he could obtain for me the right to take books out of the Athenæum and he said he would, whether or no! Monday P.M. I got the card by express mail. After seven years of hunger for the same! Te deum laudamus. I assured the dear old man that his effort of good-will and thoughtfulness would turn my fortunes, surely. By the cumulative powers of good and evil, that it must! And this morning to my high glee, such a mail before my plate. A new 'Poet Lore' with five pages devoted to me and my book. A small but welcome cheque for 'Brier Rose.' And three copies from three persons of a Saturday evening review of 'F. & M. E.' [1] in the 'Mail and Express' by Richard Henry Stoddard, praising it up to high heaven, placing me in the front of all living poets, and above all showing that he was profoundly moved by the human aspect of the play — by all those things I put into it and have been waiting for other people to get out of it.

Oh, oh, oh! Be sure I am grateful. I needed it sorely.

[1] *Fortune and Men's Eyes.*

And I am not forgetting my crystal plaything on the window-sill that has kept me alive on the rainbow, these days and months of worldly blackness.

February, 1901. In spite of going to early church, I had a morning of shudders, between high exhaustion, prospect of more of it, and requests to go to see more people and do more things. In fact I wept over the horrid torn-asunderness of trying to produce a masterpiece at a quick-lunch counter.

March, 1901. . . . Haven't I tried to give Beauty for Ashes, with every faculty I own? Have I not tried to find the gift in every suffering? Knowing always what source of strength I could have? And have I not, gladdest thing of all to me, made up my mind to acknowledge every bit of happiness I could see and so have, and so add to my having? — not believing God a miser, and feeling sure that He, at least, wouldn't think I needed no human help for ever more, because I could be so wildly delighted with the thick little tree on the corner of King Street showering leaf-shadows on the ground before the electric light!

Oh, come, I won't be afraid. I won't listen for my heart and the postman. It's insulting. (But God's Child is, nevertheless, almost ready to say: I think I could be trusted, maybe, now, with a whole loaf.)

March, 1901. I think this book of songs [1] ought to be something beautiful when it is grown and finished. Many I shall in time perceive to be less than mediocre. Some I see — even now — of a very poor quality. But they are more direct, every day, I think. And a very few seem and still seem to me very beautiful and strange and full of a shining-ness from nowhere in the world but the Outer Place where the manna comes from.

It is strange and lovely, in reading over your songs, to see the ones you had from the Earth with its own lovely beneficence toward you: and to mark the change of the voice (a voice illumined) in the songs that were fed, when the world failed you, from sheer spirit.

[1] *Singing Leaves.*

March, 1901. I never beheld anything to rival this vision of a Creature with an Environment. . . . Two desperately poor relations on both sides of the house. . . . Tragic all. We people in the middle trying to live on such small income that we keep making our capital smaller. No prospects anywhere save work. Work for nothing so far! Everybody coming meantime to sit on our knee. . . . Me in the middest of it all, feeling that socially I am now the 'entering wedge' of my family, as an infant with a growing reputation. I am flooded with invitations which cost more trolley car-fares than I have money. I am petted till I could die with exhaustion like a mauled kitten. And in the midst of my mind is the feeling that my sole and only chance for me and everybody depends on 'Marlowe,' and I positively can't get the breath to finish it, I'm so choked and squeezed. 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' Something, surely. It seems to depend on me. They say one is not clearly answered nowadays. But if God helps those who seek to help themselves, He will answer me somehow and that soon. Yes, I believe it. Somehow, after the tempest and after the fire. Yes, yes, yes.

I am only — all these months — filled with curiosity and wonder (and weariness of bones) to see how 'Marlowe' has to struggle for breath to exist. Every purpose in the world seems to cross mine. If it should be beautiful after all . . . it will seem to me the greatest miracle of my life — like a song triumphant over strangulation.

To Mary Mason

2 *March*, 1901

DEAR MARY:

. . . But I do like your chapter-reading to the children. I think people can hardly familiarize themselves too much with the New Testament, which insensibly sets people thinking. Only, don't read a whole chapter, if it tires the children. Read just an episode *and stop there*. For grown-ups, orthodox or not, I think it a decided misfortune to be

unacquainted — or rather not to be in a state of *constant* and *growing* knowledge of the life and words of Christ, whatever they may make up their minds to call him. The possession of some standard of being — some Idea of Incarnate Good — *outside* of one's self seems to me in itself a source of peace and beatitude. If a man's idea of life, behavior, goodness, is the keeping-a-perfect-poise between two extremes of action, consider the constant care, fret, and uncertainty, and the wear on his powers of judgment. Also, consider how this poise — as I have heard you, yourself, say — is daily affected by the slightest physical discomfort and perturbation; so that body, instead of arising to obey soul, clogs and distracts, nudges the wrong way, even clouds the vision and does some injustice to other creatures, because it 'wasn't itself.' Also, at best, when a man himself constantly unmakes and makes his standard, within himself, there is great danger of a serene, idealized egoism that makes for the man's comfort, temporarily, but leaves his goodness, or his 'law of life' unimaginative, unmagnetic. He may do well for himself (while he keeps the balance), but he does not do very well for others, because he makes his law to suit his spiritual experience, but he is not apt to understand the experience of others; because it takes Love to consent to leave Self for a little while, and look at life patiently from the point of view, from the circumstance, from the peculiar prison-window of another. He is not *apt*, I say, because once in a while you may see even a very simply loving impulse in a nature given over to reasonings within itself. But I have not often seen such. And I *have* seen a great deal of many natures, high and serene and beautiful to a certain degree, in themselves; but spiritually unmagnetic, tranquilly selfish, exquisitely pleased to behold others *suffering with philosophy!*

Contrast this kind of moral excellence, this culture of Mind, with the attraction that thousands of men and women found in Phillips Brooks. But don't say that isn't fair, because he was a great man. He was not born a great

man. He was not *born* that man that I saw some three weeks before he died — worn, worn-looking, till he spoke, but with eyes of such burning spiritual illumination that he need not have spoken at all. He was no orator, he had less picturesqueness than many, many men I have heard. But he *radiated* his own intense conviction. He was not born with that, either, I dare to say. And I dare to say I know where he got it. He had 'proved the doctrine' and found it true. And when heart, mind, and hands work together, they make such a burning energy of warmth and light that every kind of creature is drawn from its hutch or its burrow to see what illumines, and why!

If you will begin on one of his volumes, out of patience with *my* conviction, some day, I promise you, you will read on for yourself. I think I said once, talking with some one, that I was sorry to say I couldn't think of any living or even lately living human-being who had much inspired me — as people talk of their heroes. But I forgot Phillips Brooks. I clean forgot him, *because* I read a scrap or two from his writings every day of my life, and take it without counting, as I do the matter-of-course fact of morning. His *spirit* is the most welcome thing, I believe, since Shakspere! (For reasons different, to be sure, but not so very, very different.) And with Saint John in the first century, A.D., W. S. in the sixteenth century, and Brooks in this, I find enough to be glad of in humanity; and enough to show me that the Soul is everywhere contemporaneous; and enough to prove that Love and God are so curiously allied you cannot know much about one and miss the other.

Dearly beloved sisteren, it is now close upon noon and I must go.

Yours ever

JOSEPHINE

New York City, April, 1901. Last night before I went to sleep I thought to myself, with a sense of discovery, 'I know — I know what it is that gives me this sense of

delight in a new place, even if you are all alone and it's far away and ugly, like this city — all rows on rows of upright coffin-shaped things to hold people, so horrible to me — so hideous and so far from right. There is something that delights me and it is a sense of recognition, not of change. But you must go away to find it. It is going away, far off, where things do not know about you or care about you — to feel God there, all the same, and to take a curious joy in the sense of His presence, all the more because you are thrown upon it absolutely for your own sense of identity.' I suddenly entered this queer little inexpressible over-leaf zone of spiritual possessions and hurried into my bed, to be rid of doings and reasonings and to exist, merely, on that sense of something newly felt. It always comes so softly, like manna in the night.

April, 1901. With it all and these many people I am meeting I am so full of wonder that I couldn't sleep at all last night. I felt as if I were a child to whom God Himself had been turning over the leaves of a picture book. And what it is all about I can't see, it is so full of wonderful pain and untouchable glories. But I wanted . . . to praise God just the same: and I kept feeling as if I must see a Vision in another moment; the air was so full of abundance. Meantime for my personal share of things, again I am living for a while in that curious kind of shine that people shed on me when I am new. . . . It's my longing for good-will that gets out in a kind of warmth and draws people.

April, 1901. . . . After the wonderful day and the people, and the work and sorrows of the people — it seemed to me so wonderful that I could have stood all night with my hands held up for wonder, and a sense of blessedness raining on me, raining, raining, raining, like illumined drops of a fountain. Blessèd are the eyes which see the things we see: and let us not forget it, in hours less full of gifts.

To Edmund Clarence Stedman

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
9 *June*, 1901

DEAR MR. STEDMAN:

Guess what: and then promise not to laugh. I am going to give two English courses at Wellesley College next year. I say 'I am going to' — with a thousand *Deo Volente's* — because I have been asked to, and I have accepted the offer. And now I am fluttering in my shoes with fright and fear and terror, likewise the bitter sense of being scared! 'Twill take me out there three days in the week; and may the gods grant that I find things to say to those seniors, without using up the rest of my precious iridescent Time in filling up my own unstudious mind. — But I'm doubtin' . . .

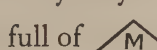
English 7 or Nineteenth Century Poets (Georgian and Victorian), and English 14, '*Modern Masterpieces*,' whatever they are: I forget. Eh, but I'm sair frichted! . . .

The unillumined world! Guess what: I sent to the 'Century' — among other things — one of the best and clearest, clearest, simplest, most translucent songs I ever showed you: and the Man wrote back that 'twas 'really too difficult for them' and sent my ewe-lamb home as fast as possible.

Really, I shall have to wait for another Century, till I see a new heaven and a new earth!

My love to you and Laura.

Sincerely yours
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

June, 1901. The other evening on my way to bed and opening the Bible with my head still full of 

and the ogre R. M.[1] — I nearly fell out of my chair at the look of the page — it might have been so detailed a command, if I had not long ago abandoned the profane use of the

[1] Richard Mansfield.

Bible as a ouija board! 'Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace. Thereby good shall come unto thee . . . Thou shalt have plenty of silver.'

June, 1901. *Te Deum Laudamus!*

I have finished 'Marlowe.' Let the Sun be a witness; since we have worked together.

July, 1901. I've swept every vestige of 'Marlowe' off the floors and torn up old notes: and put the First Draught away: and I don't want to think of it for some time. My mind is bruised with the work.

But, oh, Earth, Earth, and all ye Planets, the longing that I have to be away and refreshed — to be myself and to work whatever work I was sent to do! It does seem to me that some of them put obstacles in the way of my breath, with this tremendous ignoring of my vocation as a Vocation. And till I should — perhaps — earn something, they will never regard it as a Vocation.

July, 1901. Thirteenish. No news of anything. By last mail returns to me (from 'Atlantic') 'Daphne,' the eleventh MS. I have sent out in past ten weeks — and all returned, all from different magazines, saving the song 'Sapling' which brought me the cheque which went to pay for the typewriting of the copy of 'Marlowe' which is gone — where, angels may know, but I do not.

I have almost bled to death in the struggle to get 'Marlowe' done, against the hosts of the world, the flesh and the devil. And I feel supremely puzzled to know why I am living, if there is no place for these things now they are done. I seem to have blundered into life on the wrong star.

July, 1901. The wheels of things give a groan and a squeak, trying to turn: but something holds them. . . . Groan and squeak again, my wheel; groan and squeak again. Who knows — you may turn. . . . Come, ye powers, come. Don't stand by idle. A long pull and a strong pull now.

August, 1901. For the first time this summer I set eyes on Venus just pricking through the afterglow, the loveliest

of all the planets that shine or sing. So I filled up my heart with glories, against the time of winter. This is where a beggar must go to have some wherewithal, that he may have more. For unto him that hath shall be given and to make sure of some having to begin with, when you feel puzzled and poor, that's the main thing. When I see these sights I feel nigh crazy with beatitude. It's passion to me more clearly than anything else, and O the thousand things that come to mind.

August, 1901. Nothing I have done gives me such delight as swimming without clothes. I just feel born again. The constitution of the universe has to be thought all over from a new starting-point. Oh, oh, oh — the darlingness of it, the infantine rapture of it; — the sense of safety and lightness and truth; the way you cut the water like a little small creature and the bubbles gather on your neck; and your heart and your flesh rejoice. It's so beautiful that it sanctifies; it is like going down into a sacred river Ganges — the holy sea; but joyous-holy as heavenly things should be. It makes you see a new heaven and a new earth.

To Horace E. Scudder

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
25 *August*, 1901

DEAR MR. SCUDDER:

Here am I home again, somewhat revived with salt water! — and almost wit enough to go in when it rains. And I am starting in to scribble at lectures for English 7 and 14, and I wish I did not find prose so toilsome; for I always feel as if I ought to be rewarded with a ginger-cake for achieving a proper paragraph; and needless to say, I am not.

Yes, I have been reading every moment but this last week at Duxbury; and I did not want to read. Also, all my work has been sojourning in the Zone of Calms, as soon as it has left my hands. I was immensely vext with *Henry V* for being too lazy to sign a registry notice for 'Marlowe.'

The packet came back to me, tattooed all over with post-office explanations; but the note I sent him at the same time did not come back, and, as he is on Long Island, I gather that he simply changed his mind and would not be bothered. Very well. Let's put him down for a mere cross-eyed man. I will write to E. H. Sothern next. It is all exactly like the dire tales one hears of the Profession; but it is very trying.

Now for our private 'Marlowe': I treated *Her Ladyship's* episode very lightly from *her* standpoint, because it seemed to me, as a mundane situation, a trite one on the stage; and I think any average — that is to say, worldly — audience would fill out all its allusiveness more knowingly than I could have written. As far as her significance goes, she is meant to appear (1) as the poet's ideal Fine Woman, whom he must needs love; his patroness, whose fascinated vanity he idealizes in the first act, and sees with disillusion in the third: (2) he knows that she is a creature of original evil, but that only makes her more splendidly human to his mind, as the Incarnate World: (3) till he finds little by little that she is all for the world itself, and not for him; that she's not daring, even at evil, and that she is fain to hide behind a pious pretext out of fear; that this fetish of 'The World well lost,' in short, was a sham. And so, like many erratic geniuses, he blames it all on her, regardless of the sham love in himself, that is ready to exalt and then abase.

I wanted to work this queer play up to the discovery (to *Marlowe*, and perhaps to a part of an audience) of a true passion, albeit a spiritual passion, that might last and does illumine, even if it only puzzles the poor soul with new light and with the bare sham and selfishness of his own past. That I tried to do in Act IV; and it still reads, to my partial ear and mind, up to a true climax, in spite of its quiet method. Don't you truly think it does keep up the pitch, and rise, too? Don't you truly think an audience would feel it as a *real* thing? I hope you do.

Your suggestion that I let go, a bit, of the charge of atheism struck me. As a charge against him, I did, 'tis

true. I feared to say much about it, lest I should make a bogy-man of him. I was bent upon working out, above all things, his own face-to-face struggle with God — and his self-defeated spiritual instinct. But I think, still, I might clinch the world's side of that matter with a single sentence in the last act; perhaps a line from Gabriel Andrew or from one of the watchmen, to show that he died just too soon for the arm of the law. I'll think of that, and thank you.

Of course, you know, I could meander on forever with the eternal whys and wherefores that interweave all underneath this plot. Poor Bame especially, who is made up entirely from the name appended to the historical 'Note of Marlowe's Atheistical Opinions,' came to be a thing of pity and tremendous interest to me; whereas I began by thinking that I couldn't touch such a worm with a sword — much less a pen. I touched up his reasonable hatred of *Marlowe* with the foolish little spite (Act I), because I've seen, on this planet, that there is nothing so *tenacious* as a small spite; and so the poor soul grew into a type of the man with one idea, and solved my difficulties in the fifth act by positively going daft, in an unobtrusive way. Do say you were struck with the little last act!!!

I'm as versatile in my devotions as a pussy-cat a-washing the lovely faces of her kittens, without being able to choose between spots, stripes and plain body-color! But, dear me, how soon we people would give up, if we did not delight in our own toil! There's H. M. & Company, so doubtful, so reluctant, so altogether mute. And as for me, I would write a recommendation for 'Marlowe,' any day!

Sincerely yours
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

To Horace E. Scudder

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
2 *September*, 1901

O DEAR MR. SCUDDER!

How glad I am to think of 'Marlowe' going to be published; and how truly grateful am I for the good things you

must have said of it; and wouldn't I like to know exactly what they were!

I do, of course, realize that it's an uninviting venture for publishers, and I devoutly wish this work might in time bring in something beside honor, for I shall have to make a laurel-salad to live on, and the House will hate to see me coming. That would be too bad. Don't let them do that.

Meanwhile I shall be nerved to do great things at Wellesley, educating the American Woman to know and uphold poetry; and to buy of it largely, discreetly, advisedly, and in the fear of God. And I shall endeavor to make all that include me.

I suppose you won't be coming home before November. But you will write me a note, won't you?

Ever sincerely yours
JOSEPHINE PRESTON P.

To Anna H. Branch

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
16 *September*, 1901

DEAR ANNA:

. . . Indeed, Dreams are my great unexplored region of joy. I love to tell them and to hear tell of them. I remember well the other lyric dream you were so kindly disposed to dream of me. And this is just as agreeable. I wonder why I should appear in such guise — among dreams. If ever you perceive in that country anything of warning or enlightenment to me, you must tell it, surely.

I have been a meek-eyed grub all summer; to me, too, it has been a hard year, and it has tried to be full of cares, and succeeded more than I like to allow.

This season, do you know what? I'm destined to Teach two English Literature courses at Wellesley College: and I am therefore pledged to go out there three days in the week. — Which horribly frightens and dismays the play-instinct in me. (I was trying to console myself with Birds, you see.)

But, no matter how much there is to do, Poetry takes me by the hair every now and then; and it's up and away — Heaven knows where — but always to regions full of air and strength.

Yours ever

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

September, 1901. Yesterday morning in a dazzling weather, I rose up from my bed and I simply went out to Wellesley . . . and I met my two classes, lunched out, arranged all manner of small concerns . . . and got safely home again without any setbacks. That I did it on the fullness of the strength of the Lord I cannot doubt. And so I feel happy and quiet to-day. The work looked pleasant and everybody, also, that I've met. This is a thrilling experience; — to be a wage-earner *and* to get your wage!

October, 1901. Yes, I am a wage-earner if my heart will behave, and let me earn. And I got some salary in advance; and 'tis lucky I did: for I must needs hand over a fiver now and then to eke out where poor Mamma's scrapings fall short to keep poorer aunt and uncle in decent circumstances. O Lord, I'm afraid I'm not the cheerful giver Thou lovest: but I would be if my mother could be truly cheered. As it is, it is like a nightmare to me. I come home from the pleasantness of the college, feeling a little proud and glad and gleeful that I was helped to get out there and do my duty, after a dangerous illness; and feeling spent but happy. And I make another little effort to give up a cherished five: and there's my mother looking just as thin! Good God, it takes so much to help people to live! And these snips of money that cost so much to earn — they are just like a puppy's gift of a dried grasshopper! And I suppose this goes on and on forever and ever and ever, till Youth is ready to die.

. . . I seem to be 'pulling through' at Wellesley in spite of all. Girls at least show most deep and unaffected interest in class hours; though it's a problem how to make them work outside.

October, 1901. . . . I feel so sure of what is *in* the work, this and all, since I began to think, the sure and humble stuff it's made of, that I seem to know myself a poet, once for all. The desire to give to people what they are always wanting — and never seeing — is deep and fierce; and it flares up and scorches me with the wildest pain sometimes.

. . . I believe I've really somehow made a beautiful play, beautiful with large melodies throughout every part of a large structure. . . . And I grudge not a moment of the thousand thinkings that have gone to matters of structural beauty that no one is going to see at all . . . My sense of beauty that makes me work endlessly, whether it's waste or not, is one infinitesimal, indispensable element in the whole tale of molecular energy whereby the round earth is round. I cling to that.

And for the sense of love that passes understanding in the daily companionship of an unnamable ideal, ever since I was a little child — for the happiness of having lived about the temple as a little child and listening at night — while yet I did not know whether I heard God speaking or Eli — I am blessed and happy. I envy no man. And I pray that I may never know envy for more than one moment. To share that blessedness, to share it, to share it! To give away understanding and to earn more.

To Edmund Clarence Stedman

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
3 *November*, 1901

O DEAR MR. STEDMAN:

What is the occasion of this dismal blockade? Or what root of evil? Or wherewith shall I be comforted? I have not a word of any of you since earliest summer. At any time I could wish to hear; but now I would like to know you are there, or, if not there, somewhere; for I hope anon (which is to say, by the 16th of November) to be able to send you a copy of 'Marlowe.' . . .

I have myself been quite ill this autumn: in fact, my

Wellesley work looked impossible for some days. But I managed to creep out there, in time, and I have kept at it, ever since, with some risk. But the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune do not much regard one's daily industries and their best results. With what glee I refer my students to your works, you can't imagine! I didn't write my lectures, after all — for it would have been blind work, before meeting the classes; and, as it was I was too ill even to think of it. The class-meetings are mostly semi-discussion. And when I lecture, I find it easiest to speak from notes. But I do plan every hour very carefully, and keep every scrap of an outline. And behold, when I am stronger, I shall enjoy it much. As things are, it is effort too heavy for any being who feels fragile. But the mental relief of being some kind of a wage-earner (!) balances the physical strain. O for the golden age! But one must make-believe. . . .

I do hope you are not ill again, this year. And I do hope many things more and pleasanter than that simple wish.

Ever sincerely yours

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

December, 1901. Thank Heaven that I'm allowed — so far — to be a writer. The method is never attractive to me, save by contrast; for I hate bookishness and despise paper intellect, and don't physically enjoy sitting on one foot all my days and scribbling.

Oh, if I could only have a hand in the tug at the Drama in America. If I could only pull and haul and boost and kick and push — and hear one responsive onward squeak! I speak as if I were the only one: but I do not mean it so. Only my elbows thrill to be at it, with every power of obstinacy that has come to me from working against solid obstacles.

Charge, Sothern, charge! On, Posy, on!

December, 1901. This day, for the first time in my life, I put something in a Savings Bank. Wonder of wonders! Immemorial fifty!

It seemed so absurd, so abject, too, at my age — after such bloody toil to earn things — only fifty dollars. But if I haven't saved anything, I've managed to spend these microscopic earnings of late to divers good purposes: and if it is a marvel to me how long and furiously you can work to earn a wretched little, it's also a marvel how far that wretched little may shed its beams in homely usefulness. And it's very lucky for me (always setting aside the snuffling human consideration that it would be luckier to *have* some money, first of all), 'tis lucky for me that I am earning even this little. For now I go halves with Mamma on Uncle and Aunt's rent.

And my Pepysian account book sets forth the most ridiculous jumble of uses for December salary plus 'Harper' cheque plus 'Atlantic' cheque, viz. to wit:

1) 1/2 rent (Uncle and Aunt)
2) Stuff for church fairs
3) Gloves, lunch tickets, railroad tickets, a book, etc., for me, a few Christmas things;
4) Money toward pots and kettles for Uncle and Aunt
5) Money toward burial of poor old Maggie who died last week
6) Beer for Mamma! (an experiment to keep her from getting any thinner.)
7) Money for a Christmas tree.

Pious uses, but somewhat mixed. Filthy Lucre is tremendously interesting to me. It's so rare and curious. I could contemplate the history of a one-dollar bill for ever, though for multiplicity of experience, of course, a five-dollar bill is better. Only that's rarer, yet.

January, 1902. If only the awful burden and weight of our desperate poverty, with poor Uncle and Aunt helpless, is relieved before long, I shall be glad of the very pain of it for myself (not for Mamma). Because it's such a queer new feeling, to earn with great difficulty and to succeed in doing things beyond your strength: and then to give away every-

thing as fast as you earn it. . . . I am glad and ready to admit that it makes me know new things . . . It makes me remember the 'glorious emptiness' I wrote about in 'The Woman of Three Sorrows' when I was eighteen. I felt sure it could be true when I wrote it — that particular possession. Now I know it.

January, 1902. But you should see the Review in the 'Nation'! The context is better even than the Review which praises wholly and objects not at all and calls me different 'in kind rather than degree'; an author evincing 'not talent only but genius.' The other poets treated — and treated with severity more or less — are Gilder, Stedman, Mrs. Meynell, W. G. Henley, Thomas Hardy! I was filled with mirth and glee.

February, 1902. O a wonderful life I lead — cette vie de Cinderella — half a glitter in crystal shoes; — half mice and pumpkin and cinders! Whoever lived such a life of adventures in a nutshell.

Adventures of a Suburban Tortoise. I wish I had anybody to whom I could tell my Wonderful Adventures.

February, 1902. Much petted at Wellesley, too, by girls and faculty. And Phi Sigma is going to give me a reception on Monday. It always seems to me so fantastic, the way I'm petted personally — and batted circumstantially! But I'm interested: it's so hard. And as for this year and next: I have stricken my hopes of escape out of it all and I have made up my mind to trust the future, since I can see nothing. And I have set my teeth against complaining, and I have put my poetry all in the hands of the Lord, if He doesn't want it crushed. . . . For it is my lot to labor day by day, without expectation. But I am more thankful than I could say for the pleasantness of the place and the people out there.

March, 1902. Yesterday I made a pilgrimage to hear Paderewski, the creature to whom, after my mother, I think I am more indebted than to all the world beside.

He was his best self again, too, and good and reassuring it was to hear something Perfectly Beautiful in this world

full of agony and worry and sawdust dolls and woolen pigs with button eyes and innocent china hens. May all the stars bless the man and keep him true to the highest beauty all his life long.

April, 1902. . . . to put *Me* on a steamer as soon as Wellesley's over, and send *Me* Across. . . .

1) It was my Heart's Desire.

2) I am a poor remnant of my strength.

3) The idea of a second year of it without a tremendous bracer looks impossible.

4) Only objection . . . Pride, Pride, Pride!

I wrestled with her. . . . But for once I'm defeated, and indeed the thing that made me break down that bronze wall inside of me was the sheer wrongness of the awful feeling. For of all things on earth, that's what I would do first for others, if I could, and giving ought not to be blessed on the one side and cursed on the other.

. . . It is one of the most beautiful things that ever happened. . . . I'm too dazed to understand it. The spikes that thrust me through are — Mamma and Marion — oh, I don't want to be blessed alone!

To Lillian Shuman

DEAREST LILLIAN: *27 April*, 1902

Here's my hand and heart on it. I have made up my mind to give *you* the great happiness of giving a great thing.

—— I will.

Yours

To Lillian Shuman

June, 1902

Until we meet again, my dear human shadow of Providence, good-bye, and God bless you.

Lovingly yours

JOSEPHINE

THE GOLDEN LION
STRATFORD-ON-AVON
22 *July*, 1902

If ever I felt sure of him, here and now I am sure and content. It is dear and human and reasonable beyond all my expectation; and I am so glad to be here. —I came yesterday; but I did not go to the church, then. We walked, first, in the early evening, all over the town, amazed at the wide, clean streets, with the fair and old prospect at every corner — the dear red houses, and the pretty lines of gable and timber. We passed the Guildhall and the Grammar School, and New Place Gardens, and found our way down to the lime-tree walk, and the beautiful churchyard round the human-holy place of the world; and it was like a dream to be there.

The river goes by without breathing: — does it go by? — I think it stays a while. It is the quietest place in the whole world. There were yellow dogs running and barking in the town streets; and an immortal cat or two; and there were rowdies making a noise, and small boys shouting and playing.

This morning I went off early for a walk and to see his birthplace. I had forgotten that he must have lived there during his boyhood; and I cared little about it. But when I stepped in — ah, it's real, it's true: It was home to him for years and years of growing and capering and wishing wishes, and wondering what . . . And to see the great chimney-place where he used to watch the fire; —

That old desk from the school, too, whether it was his or not — his was like it, doubtless; and how full of school-days it was — all school-days — 1500 or 1900. — Boy all over, boy of revelry and rebellion too —

> 'And shining morning face creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school.'

(Ten thousand times realer even than it was before, now that I've seen the school — almost the Boy.)

As to the relics, I feel, in my heart, very wise. — The

portraits, there, are mostly of no good. — The Droeshout picture genuine, but poor of its kind, exceedingly, and a bad likeness. The Kesselstadt mask is the true and only one, doubt the nations never so loudly. It is the man and the belovèd: after he had died. The signet-ring is his, his, his.

And from the windows, that jangle and chime and chorus of flowers that he loved, how much more breath had they! And how they must lift their heads forever in the rain and sunlight of that praise.

In every place of this township, they cherish flowers because he cared for them; and curious it is — and above all curiosity reasonable to see creatures and things sunning themselves so late, in these reflected loves. — A kind of natural wonder that makes one content to be human, though one steps more consciously like an angel.

But oh, the Guildhall — where, looking toward the end of the room where the players must have stood and moved and spoken first before his Boyship, I could feel the lure and call of that novel world to him — and the stir of his pleased interest and eagerness to hear more of them and see more of them; — like the call to me of other lives that might have been, that may be — from every place I pass; 'Come hither, and I will shew thee many things!'

'Thus should I
Fight — die — or rule the world.'

I think perhaps that was the most wonderful moment — Destiny made a noise in one's ears.

Upstairs in the Grammar School: — and out of the windows with his wandering wit, to follow trees or robins or a fly; — oh, the wonderful place, all full of that Boy. What a customer he must have been for Dogberrys and Shallows and Caiuses.

This afternoon we drove to Shottery: — and saw the cottage; and sat beside him on that settle, and looked up the chimney with him; and begged for a rose from the garden, and had two, and a morning-glory beside. Oh, the

flowers! Blue, blue, blue and white; bachelor's buttons, lupin, and white lilies; poppies and roses and sweet briar hedges; all the colors of the earth.

And we came back to the church. I did not dare to look at the choir for a long time; but hung about the side aisles and the chapels; and looked back at the lime-tree walk where they must have carried him here; — and saw the old parish book with that baptismal registry 'Gulielmus filius Johanni Shaxpeur' and that other 'Will Shakespeare Gent' — and could not believe my eyes.

But at last I did go up: only my brain could take in nothing more but dumb wishes and thankfulness. It is the most beautiful place in the world. And I could go home, without caring to see anything more.

To Lillian Shuman

(GOLDEN LION)
STRATFORD-ON-AVON
22 *July*, 1902

DEAREST LILLIAN:

. . . My dear, to-day I've seen his birthplace, his school and the Guildhall, Anne Hathaway's cottage, and the Church of Churches; strings of old houses, lanes and by-ways; and I am so content with all — so illumined, so comforted.

Yes, I am more delighted even than in London, though I don't know how to defend myself. I had a most exciting time in London; but too little sleep to allow me to write letters. Mornings I had for my explorations; afternoons, partly — partly lion-meets; evenings mostly frivolous — to the theatre several times, and dining out, and driving off to evening things in hansoms.

My dear, I shall have volumes to relate; about taking tea with Austin Dobson; and supping several times with the Meynells; and going to see Watts Dunton and SWINBURNE. And also having tea with John Sargent in his studio! How is that for J. P.?

I may run back to London for a day (when the king gets

his crown safely on top of his head), to see the Abbey. E—— VII has interfered with my plans many times; but I forgive him and everybody else, in this place of mellow light and peace with all the world.

My dear, I hope something of this light is reflected upon you, its source. I think of you very often: would we not enjoy together?

I wished very much this morning that you were along with me. In fact, I needed you more than at any time before, for just that purpose of fellow-joy and understanding.

23 July

Oh, my dear 'Lil' — you ought to be here. Such a good time as I've had poaching at Charlecote — and bringing away poppies and ousel-feathers shed for me — and memories of deer and bob-tailed hares, and great clouds very surely lined with silver! And such days as I am spending in Stratford, taking the time to stroll and see things twice. It is the dearest place in the whole world and I could be content to go home now: — but I think I won't. I went down to Hampton Court one day from London; and on my way to Oxford (just before this), I stopped at Windsor. Did you ever see it? It's enchanting. From here, I expect to go straight to Edinburgh; — but again I *may* not; I am in such a contented daze.

The sense of *history* all about delights me, down to my shoes; and I think I am seeing it all at an opportune time (for me), with many enthusiasms fresh in my mind. Eh, won't reading be a luxury again — if I ever have the chance to call my mind my own. As to reading *Shakespere* — it's almost too blissful to begin.

. . . I stayed but two days in Oxford, long enough to rush about the loveliest colleges and chapels, and to see the Bodleian (with its Shelley relics!), and to hear so many chimes that I thought I should never sleep again. But is it not the most exquisitely beautiful city that ever was, for sheer quaintness and consecration?

Oh, I began my journey with the proper sights. Had I seen Oxford and Stratford first, their charm would have blinded me to the fascination of London. London was absorbing, splendid, horrifying, annihilating. I met great people; saw old sights o' mornings; shopped both wisely and too well; went out evenings, perforce, to gaieties; got many revelations of people and things; but somehow left it without sorrow. The country forever, and the scampering hares, the silver clouds, and the fragrance of summer!

To be sure, I expect to go up to London for an ideal day again (when I come back from Paris), to see the Abbey, if E—— VII has by that time let go his royal clutch upon the door-keys. But I somehow resent the loud and careless liveness of modern London, indifferently jostling by the scarred houses and churches and prisons that have seen men so much greater and finer die for the ideals that made us. And after feeling my way around the pitch-dark pens that held Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Thomas More, in the Tower, I cannot, somehow, bear it to see M. P.'s falling asleep in the House, with their tall silk hats upon their uninteresting heads; and their heads so securely nodding over their cravats. 'Dear lady, but you're a fiery Radical!' remarked an Englishman to me, the other evening in an argument (which *he* had begun). And of course, like any American, I was secretly much pleased; but 'tis a fact that one does not know how fiery one *is* on some points, till a little exploration brings out one's consciousness.

24 *July*

I have just been down to an early morning service at the Church; and I walked back by the Grammar School and the Guild Chapel and New Place. It's a heavenly morning; and we think we'll drive to Warwick and take our sketch things along for the day. I suppose I ought to be 'getting on' to Scotland; — but I'm in no hurry at all!

Good-bye for now.

Three green things I send to you (and a sprinkle of rose-leaves from Anne Hathaway's garden); — a rose-

leaf, also, and a holly leaf from Charlecote, where he surely poached — I hope — in his boyish days; — and a sprig of yew from the loveliest churchyard in the world, outside the choir-wall.

Yours always JOSEPHINE

Take good care of yourself.

To Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson

36 LINNÆAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE
2 *October*, 1902

DEAR COLONEL HIGGINSON:

I confided to you so much anguish of mind last year that I must let you know this time, I've found a way to breathe again and possess a few inches of my own mind, and I am so happy! (I hope it may last: but whether it lasts or not, — at 7.35 P.M. Thursday, the 2nd of October, 1902, I am happy, I am happy!)

I have dropped one of my Wellesley courses — the new one that I would have had to 'get up'; and I have dropped it soberly, discreetly, advisedly — because the requisite *six* students had not elected it yet, students always fearing a new course. The Department assured me that it could easily fill up the class, but I implored it not to; and, having thus resolutely removed (half) the bread from my own mouth, I am sitting and swinging my feet from a pinnacle, of the seventh heaven; and, when I have caught my breath I shall set about tuning up my poor dear cithern. Fortunately, the two extra relations we had to look after last year are at present looking after themselves; so that I can take the risk and also the chance to mend my heart and use my wits; and the moment I had decided to drop the course, I heard from a beatific man in New York (the head of the Brearley School), who desires me to give ten or twelve talks, about anything in literature, at any time I choose, for anything I will! So that I believe I see myself provided for, and maybe the pin-feathers will unfold from my wings again, and Maybe I shall be able to write things

this year. I am tied to Wellesley for the same three days a week, the same journey; but only one class, praise Heaven. And I write you this lengthy and unnecessary tale, because I am that happy to be alive again, and no one of the good friends I've worried must be troubled concerning me now. 'Tis very blessed, just the same, to know that one has friends to worry.

Ever sincerely
JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

Oh, 'The Ravens' was the one poem I wrote last year, and a faithful account of my own state of mind, tho' people do not know it, and need not. I wish they had not made a picture for it.

To Lillian Shuman

Friday Noon

— Yours here! — All's well! — Best yet. — Isn't it funny? — I will.
D.V. —
Monday 16th
4.55 P.M.
North Station
You and Me! —

J. P.

To Lillian Shuman

Song

Underneath your window,
What have I to sing,
But the message of the vine
That would climb and cling?

Underneath your window,
What have I to show
But the crocus-heart abeat
Under drifted snow!

———⌣——— ☿.

You have not written and you have not spoken. I

looked for you among all the hoary-headed Authors; but you were not there!

Guess. Who am I?

November, 1902. A cup of water by the way; nothing more nor less than some undertone talk with the Syrian Kahlil Gibran. . . . It was five years ago that I saw the Syrian boy . . . and the drawing that he sent me hangs over my desk ever since, as a blessed reminder of the things I love that seem so impossibly far from my hands and my hunger and thirst, here, now, in this noise and constant bitter effort after the things that are nothing to me but inscrutable duty. Spiritual substance again.

. . . His imagination has only developed — it is not spotted from the world. The same soul, the same hand, I saw in the child's drawings. And I am glad and refreshed again to have this substance of the spirit proven.

November, 1902. What everlasting symbols women are! I know so well, now, when these beautiful moments happen, that it is none of it for me. I know so well that I am a symbol for somebody; I am a prism that catches the light a moment. It is the light that gladdens, not the prism. And yet for that moment, the prism, the symbol, the bringer of tidings, the accidental woman, becomes perforce an ἄγγελος, a messenger of God, an angel truly, wonderfully, most humbly. And if she stops to know it, she knows how and why and for how long, and she must choose between the humbleness of real angelhood or the bitter pride of self-love that is bound to hurt sooner or later. 'Tis queer; I'm always upbraided for being impersonal. But much as vainglory urges and pricks me on to have things and prank myself out and think no more, the truth won't let me be personal for two minutes together.

I don't believe in it and that's all there is to say.

January, 1903. I have cast the die and declined to bind myself to give one course at Wellesley next year. Something must be risked, if I starve in the process. Now comes the question. If not Wellesley, what?

I am torn into a fringe. . . . Three longish things I have written . . . many songs, a kind of froth of despair: I scrawled out a sketch for a Psyche Masque on New Year's Day; and daily I add some note or 'Mem' to the paper packets of two uppermost Plays.

But I have struck a 'second wind' of some sort of bravado to get me through these Wellesley journeys the rest of the year. And work or no work, I desire to be not only faithful but radiant about it. . . . I am resolved with all my heart to spend my colors generously as if I knew that every draught of sunshine would renew them in a greater glory. I am resolved that I will not be pinched black and blue with fear and dread. If I am going under, I am going under with all flags flying.

To Lillian Shuman

31 *January*, 1903

I see you, my poor tired-out Dear, in that little cot-bed, and I hope you are not all the time sitting up to say things to people. Don't get any more ill! —

That parting counsel (high-fantastical as it sounded) I meant.

Sometimes when I have been ill (I know whereof I speak, for I have been a 'Delicate Child!') — if people let me be alone at all, I have had a wonderful sense of freshness and wisdom envelop me from just that curious alertness of live Inside and weak and passive Outside; as if something we surmise to be the Music of the Spheres were *inscribing* in some manner the surface of my mind with its own system of notation; a notation answering to enormous things; — large curves and queries and sweetnesses of a soundless music. I only hope you may be sure of enough quiet to watch these things going on and to feel them filling up! For sometimes even the kindliest spirit coming in with a glass of milk seems a bitter and undeserved and clod-hopping destroyer of peace. . . .

Yours with love

JOSEPHINE PRESTON P.

February, 1903. We talk a great deal about our souls (as if they were accessory), and yet whenever anything on earth *besides* material things manifests its substantialness we are greatly astonished and call it 'extraordinary,' a coincidence; something to be suspected. We do not accustom ourselves to our Identity as souls housed within bodies: we have all infinitude, if we want to own it; and we say, 'only a little if you please.'

But it is strange enough at moments to feel oneself an immortal, half-tried, faintly known, much doubted Soul, a tremendous potential force, glaring through its body.

March, 1903. All circumstances are rather racking. I find myself saying over, and over, to myself, without being able to see,

'Level wings — level wings —
Keep your wings level'

I know that I am learning marvellous things through marvellous pain, if I can be big enough not to despair.

I think after all, with me, it's tenacity of imagination or something else, that pulls me through things.

March, 1903. It is so glad, the way in which those times come to pass, when over and under all stir and fret of circumstance, the flood of reminiscence takes you and you know yourself to be a blessed one and in your grief blessed — even if that sense of blessedness lift you unto the hill-top but once in three years.

. . . Blessed am I, though, that have hungered and thirsted all my life. For I am filled indeed.

Oh, keep it — the hill-top hour when every grief that ever one has had is turned to knowledge, and love of all the world would lose inevitably something of its rewarding joy if even one such grief had never been.

To Margarethe Müller

3 April, 1903

O MY DEAR REFUGE!

. . . Does it not seem to you, with all your ruddy desire to know the big and simple things of life, that everything becomes most un-simple as you approach it? Do you ever see any 'precedent' for anything in your own life? I don't. I have never seen — by land or sea — anything that solves for me the problems I meet — that must needs spring from chemical combinations of character; and I know 'tis so with you. (All these rhetorical questions, O dear M. M., you needn't feel called upon to waste a stamp on.) But seriously, more and more truly do I believe — putting aside picture-book metaphors — that the shortest cut towards one's Identity (with all its tasks) is simply to assume that you are, first of all, immortal; and secondly, that you are capable of doing anything at all you think of, without limiting the things you are going to think of; and thirdly, that to assist your schemes, you must help yourself to as much of the beauty of the universe, and as many of the strengths, as you perceive or imagine. Fill your pockets with the candor of high heaven, so to speak, and the briar-rose defences — for friends — that never hurt; and the omnipotence of fire and the recompense of violets and the vision of the evening star and the momentary contentment of a sparrow in a mud-puddle. . . .

If I see you not before next Thursday, look to see me then. You'll know me by the large halo — that I am struggling to fit. But yours fits always; and you and it expand together.

Bless you, dear M. .

Your special

To Lillian Shuman

CAMBRIDGE, 2 *June*
(*The Tooth of June*)

MY DEAR AND MINDFUL:

. . . This weather is enough to chill one's aspirations, is it not? But it sulks alike upon the just and the unjust, and I need not take it as a personal injury, I suppose. Ah, but . . . I've heard Trumpets again — my soul thinks. And my tired heart feels like a cold Potato-Cake; just exactly. I don't see why *I — I — I* must lead such a strenuous life. I don't. But perhaps you don't see why you — you — you should lead one, either. O for a test of

Joy

to see if one's eyes could stand the blaze of it! I want it so much and often for *you*, that I almost think you'll get it as I hope. For I sometimes see people dear to me (outside my family circle) made happy. And it is a wonderful spectacle at which I can usually warm my hands.

Love to you, truly, from

Yours-always-here

June, 1903. Ah — what a breath! — I have written five songs!

I am well persuaded in myself that I must charge for the hill-top, mindless of guns. There are ninety-nine chances against me. But the hundredth chance is the only one that can do any positive good. Take the hill-top I must, or do and be nothing, henceforth, forever.

And hideous as every prospect is, just now, I know well what I have sown, as far as desires and endeavor and the stuff of effort goes. And I am resolved to trust my sowing.

Well I know how full a measure and running over — when by chance any sort of return does come — how full a measure makes one's soul surprised. I know it from the sweet unearthly things that let down showers of comfort

over me once in a while after a long, long walk, barefooted, over broken potshards. They were always little spiritual sowings — for silver and gold have I none — but it may be so some day, with these awful earthly needs that try to dishonor us with the serfdom of poverty: serfdom it is, this time and country. Ugh — that subtle dishonor that it offers the spirit and the mind all the time, tempting them with every most pious bait of momentary help and of everlasting self-sacrifice, that devil's own lure of drudgery for some one's sake — to put off every risk, and to be some incalculably silent, deaf and blind and safe part of the machine; to have to sell one's birthright, one's independence, one's identity, for the nearest means of livelihood to make 'next year' secure!

O you Devil of the times I live in, you Devil in a monk's hood, too — Poverty, Poverty, Poverty, how long, how long?

June, 1903. . . . Looking over diaries.

. . . I know that much of that high-strung nonsensical melancholy mixed up with High C glories of enjoyment was the real despair of youth that vainly desires high things and knows not how or where to find them, living among good folk without an ideal save of worldly respectability. But whatever things were making me what I was, how well I realize now that I needed hard life and certainly got it; and that much as I suffered through the long starvations and denial and solitude of seventeen to twenty-one and bitterer lessons yet from twenty-one and after, nothing less than starvation first and hard labor after and a pinch of solitary confinement could have reduced that bundle of unconsidered energies . . . to a sense of life: to any sense at all. . . . I know that I demanded nothing of any creature but myself: it was a life of insane spending. But I can't see in it, at that date, a single positive element or even leading to good — save its incessant and fervid admirations. Overwhelming gratitude to anything that struck it as beautiful — creature, fact, idea — that was the Jacob's ladder.

To Lillian Shuman

20 *June*, 1903

ARIEL AHOY! —

Do you know that this is the eve of a very important anniversary? Do you know what happened a year ago tomorrow, 21 June, 1902? [1] — (Beside the Summer Solstice, which is a trifling concern that only involves the sun and the equator.)

? ? ?

Well, I know; and well I may, incorrigible sailor that I am. And this is to tell you, dear one, that the thing is recorded gloriously on the little sun-dial I keep in my heart.

Yours with love and mindfulness

J. P.

June, 1903. Last Sunday at home in 36 Linnæan Street; I wonder when we shall have a home again. When and if. Prospects are too displeasing to look at. Past is too laborious and painful. In short, nothing is clear but the fact that it is only right to move out of a house when you cannot pay the rent; and that if you can't afford to live comfortably you must live discomfortably till you earn some wherewithal which — God knows — is the problem before Sister and me. But I still believe I have done well to leave off teaching: for that way madness lies, to me. And I see that I have got to bind up my heart and fear nothing. It would be very bitter and terrifying to leave this place, if I took time to listen to the terrors and to feel the bitterness. And it sickens me personally to give up the sweet peace of my little room upstairs that I blessed with candle and moonlight when I came into it the first evening and that I have kept in that peace and blessedness ever since: so that I made it a refuge and it made for me a refuge in my own mind, from care and bitterness. The

[1] Sailing for Europe.

whiteness and bareness; the bright simplicity; the tree-tops and the breeze, the cross over the mantel, the roses all over the wall and no pictures, the green seat by the window and the rainbow-maker on the window-sill, the green seat under the mantel and the Japanese cabinet standing on it, my pet belonging, and such a fine house for treasures; from the drawer for lace and thin stuff, and the drawer for silk and ribbons, to the little places with doors where I kept letters and certain MSS. beginnings and the violet yarn and the blue, whereof I make the 'holy strings.' All the dear sense and nonsense.

Well — I haven't even a picture of it and it's all very well. Nobody knew the room. But I knew it: and now it must go all to pieces. I would not be loath to leave my blessing there for the next comer. But I am very loath to think of it as such a little dedicated place, left defenceless.

July, 1903. My mind was turning paler than a dandelion's ghost from crushed acquiescence and crawling duteousness. . . . I have that two years' experience as a power in my elbow: and I have ever so many things more. God grant it may not have squeezed my Canzone fairly out of my heart.

July, 1903. Yesterday evening, walking by the brook, I unclasped a little string of amber I wore (for sake of reminiscence) and dropped it softly into a shallow pool, then hopped over a stone or two to catch it before it went down the little rapids. And if you'll believe it, the current, with the gentlest touch, just tied one knot in it — so — and let me take it back from the next shallow, all wet and sparkling, for a token. But I never doubted the naiads.

August, 1903. If it were not for the continued and marvellous story that threads along within my pallid and alarming circumstance, I should cease to be, I think. I feel like a waif, hungry and bound to starve soon . . . and yet habit has made me such a hypocritic cheer over my face and around my ways that I see and know wonderingly what queer seeds of joy a sad heart can sow.

To Margarethe Müller

3 *August*, 1903

FRAULEIN MARGHERITA:

. . . Yesterday morning I had my last dip, I suppose. (For I am going to-morrow or next day.) It was Sunday morning, and I counted the boarders as they drove to the Meeting-House, for to hear an unspeakable sermon. I alone was left behind. So as soon as the pious dust rose after them, I seized my basket and made off to the woods, where you may be quite sure there is no fishing, o' Sundays. Up, up, up the brookside to my Baths I went, where the shadow is green and leafy all over the clearest shallow water you ever saw; and the trees meet overhead. I have a crescent-shaped pool by a long, mossy Brunhilde rock; guarded by two overleaning fir-trees that try to reach an overleaning white birch on the other bank; and up the large smooth rocks, from step to step you walk through waterfalls. I hung my garments in some bushes up one bank, and took with me all my strings of amber, for to dip them freshly and bring away good pagan memories. And oh, the heavenly play-time that I had, like a newborn child (if they were capable of such good times) in that delicious water; and out of it, sitting on a moss-rock; and later I found a positive little fir-tree cage, where one could sit and dry off, sans towel, in that warm fragrance; and make up one's mind whether it is happier to be a naiad or a dryad, or a Heliad! I think I have lived sometime within all these creatures, sunlight, water, trees; for I can't make up my mind. They all fill me with such wild joy. You can never be quite the same person again, after once putting off all your clothes (resolutely!) and bathing in a mountain-brook. It washes away some mental cobwebs forever and ever; and you feel such a freshened Self underneath, the immortal sense of the natural-man, serene and sovereign, and tranquilly mysterious to yourself, without the query-fever; a joyous and self-possessed Mystery, once for all. . . .

To Katharine Lee Bates

August, 1903

DEAR POET:

First of all, I must say that I think your great-little songs in the 'Century' are something to elate you — me, too, or anybody else. I don't know where I've seen a poem that so delighted me.

> 'We are our longing. Thus
> Let Love remember us,'

says once for all the sum of a long, long philosophy, and the best philosophy, too, for a working world. I am so glad to know, too, the pleasure it must give you to behold this little light out-from-under the bushel. — And how I watch for all the rest!

I've had an excellent rest, the best basis for work that must needs be incessant and high-strung all winter — that is, winning some livelihood, from time to time, out of writing, just — plus constant household flights of endeavor. But it scares me not at all; and I have 'laid great bases' for future labor, and put in shape the song-book that is coming out this November. Best love to Sigurd[1] from Patsey[1] and me. The unquiet treasure he'll be for you, this year! — but a thousandfold reward every hour of his life, bless him, and a very present help, worth ten thousand of every *objet d'art* he'll break with one wag of his tail — or every hat that he shall devour.

I know he will arrange still-life studies for you in your drawing-room, of tooth-brushes and fine underclothes, when you usher in distinguished guests. But it is all supremely worth while. — Allah pity the dogless.

We have been homeless this summer, looking for another house of lesser rent, and, of course, more advantages! And in three days we expect to move into said dwelling; I picture you receiving freshmen and graduate students (with the miniature of Heywood's grandpa concealed in

[1] The dogs.

your professorial bosom) — but Sigurd will be your good comfort and guardian of the regions of song-making.

Ever yours

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

August, 1903. O, my good even, to-day I have felt something like the overflowing lonely joy of that day, years ago, when I sent out 'The Wayfarers,' never knowing how scantily they would fare. But what does it all matter? The unnamable joy of it, when it comes, fills every emptiness. And if I should have won out of these latest hard years a hundredth part of what my heart desired to bring back and give away, I shall be a very blessed creature — I am: such wishes put the songs together. And I know that I have found some singing leaves.

Says the title-page

The Singing Leaves: a Book of Songs and Spells.

'Come' my beloved, let us go forth into the field. Let us lodge in the villages.'

When I look at it, I feel all silvered over with something.

August, 1903. I have faith in this purpose of Life, though, all the time I am myself: and a kind of desperate wish to have *It* know I understand a little. But even while I hold my hands out towards it with a certain radiance in me, the hour's insight and glad hardihood to go down into my dark of nothingness, my heart is shaken like a child's and I almost break with the grief and the wear and the hopeless sameness of these tortured years.

Almost it seems as if I were slight and disbodied and stript of all things, enough for me to walk upon the water.

August, 1903. At least I know very well that whatever poetry has to endure in this time and place, it is torment to me to write anything else; and I won't if I can help it. Must needs abide by one's choice, then.

To Mary Mason

23 MAPLE STREET
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS
13 *August*, 1903

DEAR MARY:

. . . O my dear Mary, we surely *have* thought of a flat any number of times; but it is quite impossible for our present numbers; and a workroom outside I could never pay for. You see I, myself, have to live from hand to mouth this year, having deliberately declined my Wellesley position; and I am now for the first time tasting the complete, if onaisy, independence of living sans anything whatever — save care and love from Mamma; with a droll sum in the Savings Bank, to take care of me for a few months on; and a droll calmness — or perhaps vacuity — in my brain regarding what happens after that. Of course I trust to earn — in little cheques — enough to keep things going, while I use my time to produce things of larger size than these last two years have permitted. These details are to make matters clearer only. I feel well, at present; and I am infinitely heartened by the fact that I have — in spite of these sordid years — my little Song-Book out of all that; things wrung out of my mind, or picked off the nettles, or distilled by single drops in some manner beyond my comprehension, during two years of torment; and polished and said over and winnowed out, till I was able to leave the Book yesterday with H. M. and Company; — eighty-eight songs; about all kinds of people and things. I hope some people may find in it what I put there. If they do, I will grudge nothing in the years; and distrust nothing to come.

Whatever they think of the book, the title-page will be a joy. I had to give up what I had meant to name it, 'The Old Wonders,' 'cause something called 'The Old Wonder' was printed last year. So I have named it something else; with a verse also from Solomon's Song that delights me all to pieces; it is so right.

Therefore you shall behold upon the title-page before 'tis out —

The Singing Leaves

A Book of Songs and Spells

'Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field. Let us lodge in the villages.'

Héjà! — (I'm that gleeful because I left it yesterday; and the House is terribly pleased with it — the proportion that I saw.) And I'm enjoying, therefore, the only manner of riches I shall ever know. . . .

Nice Mary — to put it moderately!

Ever yours with love

(Cheerful) JOSEPHINE

To Lillian Shuman

5 September, 1903

DEAREST ARIEL:

. . . I may as well say briefly, now as later, for the thing is bound to change much in my world (of things) that the 'absolutism of the winter' (well-said, Ariel) has set in, truly, with a serious, candid and would-be terrifying consciousness; that we Peabodys have lost about everything we had, which was at no time much. As I wrote you in parables, before I knew the worst of it — we have been trying to keep out the sea, with our fingers in the leak of a slender dyke. But it is literally true, that after this awful summer in the whole world of business affairs, stocks and all — we have nothing left whatever, save a few little stocks that pay nothing now; and we have made sure of this (necessary) moving and contemporary bills, by borrowing at once, a certain sum; so that we can draw breath for work. Grandmother's board and certain household adjustments will serve for rent; and for everything else, M. P. and I *have got* to be responsible somehow, somewhere, and whether or no. . . .

I relate all this to make clear a few simple outlines; for I know your Ariel brain would be darting this way and that, in search of some escape. But be at peace and don't let me depress you. There is no escape.

There must be some strong necessity at the roots of things, for this grim demand after long years of trial. And I am not dismayed, for myself. It would be very fearful to my soul, if my soul did not know fear to be contemptible, with no right dominion in any world but the world of the sick. And I have known within myself all summer, that I should have to ride after *some* Dark Tower soon; just what I did not perceive; but I heard that challenge in the future. And you must not think that I am going to disown the enlightenments of the hill-top hours I've had this year, as soon as I come to a dark valley. I shall have bad times, indeed, now and then; but I shall try to hold to the word I feel within me at this very moment: — 'Take your rush-light, now, and go down to the nethermost dark.' If my rush-light is worth anything, it will stand the test of a mystery that it can discern only step by step.

Therefore, Lil, I'm provided for, roughly speaking, for the good part of a year. We all are, thus. And I am going (D.V.) to write, as hard as I can, to produce what may take care of all this, if not for far ahead, at least little by little. I must needs turn mustard-seed; but why not?

And the preparations for 'The Singing Leaves' are pleasant, all.

I learned that situation the day before I went to Duxbury; so that time to gather my thoughts together was better for me, perhaps, than any bright bewilderment of sailing. For I was numb.

Love to you, from all of us, and love and good cheer (yes, truly)

From yours ever

To Mary Mason

6 September, 1903

MARY DEAR:

. . . And as to us — (let's match miseries!) we have this summer lost everything we have. So that our removal into a cheaper house is but the beginning of a problem so dire that it positively *elates* me (— except on cloudy days and towards night, you know!). . .

I am busied with arrangements for the Song-Book; and my *métier* seems clear to me thus far; I must write, write, write, write, write! — It's a neck-and-neck race with the Wolf, to be sure, after a few months. . . .

Till the 15th, then, we wade in paint-pots and paper scraps and soapsuds and Putz pomade (unrivalled) for brass and tin.

Thereafter, I wade directly into a reservoir of Ink, whence I hope to Produce much Poesy — not to Prophesy Prose! (I'm afraid I've said that before, to-day. But it sounds so glib and puffy, like a fat sparrow on a curb-stone.). . .

To Lillian Shuman

THE (20) FOREST!
27 September, 1903

DEAR ARIEL:

. . . I'm going to take a Monday morning private pupil (literary aspirant) for a few months, beginning to-morrow, tho' my little study is not yet to be sat in, it's so full of trunks and things.

But, believe me, Ariel, I am wonderfully rosy, in spite of all, and the variety of constant work is much better for me than that Wellesley grind. In the end, too, I hope to earn much, much more; for I have letters from the Harper editors announcing their eagerness to see and — most likely — print anything I am ever to do.

I am much blither than you will know, until you see me.

And let me tell you this thing I've learned — from other times than this, too. It comes to pass, when you take your little rush-light and go down into a darkness — that it is no longer dark.

Ever yours

To Lillian Shuman

20 FOREST STREET
15 *October*, 1903

Thanks, Delicate Ariel!

. . . (Best for me not to lunch out with any one for some days to come, indeed! Not even Hand-Sapolio hath *quite* removed the ground-in, gray-green, paint that adorns my finger-tips. Picture a Parker House waiter watching said fingers trying to hide under a lemon slice in a finger-bowl!) But by next week, Ariel, my own precincts should be somewhere near fit; and you must come out, MUST, indeed.

Just let me tell you that yesterday two people said to me, 'What a Sweet Hat you have on!' — And I smiled mutely thereat, for I had trimmed the same that afternoon, in some fifteen minutes, with certain ingredients I found at hand, and a certain fine Nonchalance.

(Nonchalance, I discover, is a splendid trimming for hats *in extremis!*)

Ever yours

November, 1903. Always this 'happy' face of mine! . . . The only consciousness in which I find it possible to live at all is the consciousness of what I would Give. . . . I give it — but clearly whether anybody receives it or not. My whole life is a kind of incessant lonely song. Because no songfulness happens to me from outside, but I must have it and so I make it. And so it makes my face look happy outside a tortured heart.

November, 1903. Somebody objected to 'this over-

enthusiasm, the tiresome exuberance of young girls that leads nowhere' — as if it need lead anywhere — dear gush and bubble — and 'gush' if you choose — of merest youth.

The sadder we are the more we ought to cherish the joyousness of others. It chills my soul with horror to hear her and others pouring contempt on the very nature of Youth and Gaiety.

February 6, 1904. And it comes back to the same old thing: human nature has to live to music, in order to live at all. To the Sound, or Sense, of Music, one can do anything — work, dance, cobble; fight — say farewell, die.

April, 1904. I have written a song or two — the music I mean, and I hope that may start my blood bubbling according to its nature. The perversity of my musical impulse, in a creature so ignorant she has to search all the books on the music stand to find out how to put down any of the things she hears in her mind! But . . . the only way to arrive at singing is to sing.

April, 1904. O Sole delight and source of freshness! I have just written straight through a wild first draught of that one-act (Anglo-Saxon) play [1] I had on my mind. Half yesterday and half to-day. 'Tis all wild and scrubby; without more than ten lines in the 560 that will stand as they are when it is done; no doubt. But I've done that much and I have it to work on; and it is around me for a house; and over me for a hope. And I feel distractedly happy.

May, 1904. The only rescue within myself from the utter nothingness of nethermost dark is to Give, Give, Give; to rouse one's dying heart and dim eyes to the search for a Something . . . to give to somebody. And behold the very effort it takes to give out of nothingness shows that the thing weighs, it is something . . . it proves you, after all, a creature of possession.

And Song must go with work because if I have not Beauty I must die . . . If song will not come to me, I must

[1] *Wings.*

weave singing in somehow and find my way about with that one clew.

May, 1904. To-day I wish to write nothing else but music all the time. It is a special mercy to my brain, since it must ever be hard-worked, that it has this little fountain in the middle where I may skip and dip and flutter like a sparrow.

June, 1904. There is one thing very plain. The only thing in the world that makes me feel rich is to spend myself richly in the effort to share Beauty.

To Lillian Shuman

14 *July*, 1904

DEAREST LIL:

You will laugh, I think, when you see this Valuable Loan. But I want you to wear my 'home-made talisman' somewhere or other, while you are away; because it has never been dipped in anything but the most beautiful influences; and so it ought to take a little blessing with it, beside the companionship of the Lover of Wings.

Take me with you, in it; and do this whimsical thing for me. Whenever you come to a water that runs and sings — like the rivers Colwyn and Glaslyn at Beddgelert — or any other lovely water, dip the moonstone for my sake, and think a happy spell for you and me.

Silver wings with you; your golden wings with me.

I wish I had time, wit, and other means to make your own talisman for you. But it takes years and years!!!

So tuck away this, because I'm fond of the queer little thing. It knows a great deal. And it must bring you back safely and well.

Yours ever

To Lillian Shuman

(CAMBRIDGE), 12 *August*, 1904

DEAREST LIL:

It gave me *such* a breeze of glee yesterday, when your message from Canterbury fell into my hands. *You* in Canterbury! I didn't know you were going there; and how glad I am! My adored Canterbury, where I had such a perfect (if solitary) day and night! Oh, Oh! — Ariel marvelling at that Gate, and walking through, to see the wonders that I saw — it feels too good to be true; — a kind of mystically simultaneous joy, like the brightness of two stars that shine together with a light that's two years old by the time it lightens! (Do you follow my abstruse gropings?)

And if you walk (in Beddgelert) from the Royal Goat to the Pass of Aberglaslyn, on a fine morning of sun and heather, I believe you will see my joyous astral-body hopping and skipping before and behind you, and right and left, and near and far; — look for an apparition in a short brown skirt and unresting russet shoes, and a kind of wider brown Robin-Hood hat with a brown and white quill in it!

'Tis I! Don't allure me too long; for I ought to be here at work!

Héjà! What times we'll have in September, saying 'Didn't you!' and 'Wasn't it!' and chiming like immortal larks.

I was so glad of your letter from the steamer, dear and mindful. It was truly one to read in that maze of trees, as I read it. I came home (reluctantly) on the 9th of August, having spent more than three weeks of the completest idleness in a large and golden weather. The space, the liberty, the remoteness from things that touch (to clutch) and speak (to demand) rested me unspeakably. And it was a sore-needed rest. I tried vainly to work at first; and found it impossible. So I steeped my mind in utter vacancy for the time; it seemed wisest; and no other thing was possible. . . .

Always yours

To Abbie Farwell Brown

CAMBRIDGE, 19 *August*, 1904

MY DEAREST LOCKS:

. . . Now I'm home, I resolve to dig up again my mental Anthology. Do you remember yours? — My thirty-five sonnets de Wm. S. — and all the rest of it. It used to put me in tune when all else failed; also it kept one in a poetry habit. The excruciating task I've made of this little small Play (only 450 lines of blank verse) showed me that it is a *norful* thing when time and tide tear you from the constant companionship of your rightful work. Great gods of Greece! To live or hear Prose all day long is enough to make anybody jump off Harvard Bridge. I feel perfectly uproarious to be back at dramatic poetry and I won't be torn from it again if I have to sit up nights. My skin will come, too, if I *am* torn from it. — I have to be about a prose play, I suppose, now. But Poetry of some kind should be going on forever like this summer sea of crickets; else nothing means anything to me (but torment).

Love to you; and thanks for a highly delectable letter.

Yours ever

WING

To Lillian Shuman

CAMBRIDGE, 19 *August*, 1904

HAIL ARIEL! —

And welcome soon, I trust. I've revelled in the knowledge that the Old World has had the same perfect weather that has cheered our unenlivened days. And how I long to hear all you've seen! I've nothing at all to write since last I wrote. 'Cause nobody is near town; and nothing is doing (except as much work as anybody can do). M. S. P. and I have been sitting on our feet in our respective workshops; she toiling over Houghton-Mifflin's innumerable changes of mind in respect to book-covers; I prodding on my woolly wits in an effort to get a final and Perfect

(?!?!?!?!) version of 'The Wings' done; not an easy matter, if you happen to feel like a canton-flannel sheep with button-eyes. . . .

To-day, at last, 'tis done. And I skipped, with Patsey, to the Post, and loosed 'The Wings' in the direction of New York. I have swept my room and table clean of the remaining feathers; and day-after-the-day-after-to-morrow, Marion and I (expect to) go to Chebeague for a little while, as I wrote. — The sea will bring my colors back within and without, I hope, in time for You. . . .

After the struggle I've had with my little play (after too much prose endeavor and too much summer weariness) I see very well that it is a fatal thing to let go of poetry *at all, ever*, if it is your *métier*. I had to, for a time; but it takes infinite pains to catch up; and tho' I think this play *dramatically* strong and moving, I don't know when I shall ever catch up with my old self, in the matter of lyrical melody and imagination and color. And I'm resolved to hold on, day and night; — to learn by heart what others have said — to make up for long days of prose; and to write, write, write, humbly, discordantly, patiently, undoubtingly, by little and little, with trust in the everlasting strength of the Beauty I can always *perceive* — until it may be granted me to overtake my Well-Belovèd; whom I have never forsaken in this life, but from whom I have been sorely parted by freaks of wind and tide. And I mean to write a great long Song in praise of that unnamable one, before I die. (I've begun it now.)

It all comes back to that wise caterpillar-ish sentence of Confucius — did you copy it last summer?

'In forming a mountain, were I to stop when one basket of earth is lacking, I actually stop. And in the same manner, were I to add to the level ground but one basket of earth daily, I am really building a mountain.'

But enough of these moral sayings. — I'll have done,

> 'And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales,
> And sail so expeditious. . . .
> Please you, draw near!'

Love to you, and a kiss for the 3rd of September with this little green leaf. —

Ever your

Greetings to your dear father.

Ottawa, November, 1904. Also — and best of all — the warmth and change and new voices, and sense now and then of comradeship — and side-lights on old friends — all these things woke up my Thinking Mind, and every day and all day long, it mused and sang and delighted in sights and insights like an immortal Cicada.

To Lillian Shuman

6 January, 1905

Hail, and Happy Morning to Ariel on the Bat's Back! — (Which is to say, Ariel *couched* in quietude.) Sun yourself inside of all that amber, dearest Fly, and store up treasures and treasures. Don't forget to look out on Venus, high in the west, every afterglow; and Jupiter, high in the east; and — in a few days — the new moon, as big as an eye-lash, just — to see.

. . . May Moultonboro have a week or two for you and me this summer! I *must* see my brook, and tuck myself up in (even that hard and hilly) bed at night for ten hours' sleep with the door open.

Au revoir, my dear. I love to think that you are quiet; and I hope there flows into your mind and spirit that subtle, wide, exquisite tide of renewal and beatitude that I have so often known, in other years, when I was 'ill, but not *too* ill,' only ill enough to be at peace.

My love to you, and a kiss on the top of your brown head.

Your mindful

POSE

To Lillian Shuman

Ah, my dear Ariel, I know you're happy to-day! I had no need to wish it on my Ring. I know very well — though I have not practised it much of late — that the surest way of happiness is to gladden others. And I felt quite sure, when you flew away, yesterday evening, that your heart was as blithe as mine, Giver of good gifts, seen and unseen. This is a little word to tell you so; not to count over the gifts and surprises. For that I have not Numbers enough to do. Rings, pictures, Things to write With, and On and For; Things to wear and Things to eat; and Things to look at. Never was such a caravan heard of. And just look here at the lovely thing I've found to do, on special occasions (like this) and sometimes before and after a poem.[1] — Look —

With my dearest blessing —

To Margarethe Müller

AH, MY DEAREST M.: 3 *April*, 1905

. . . Yes, body feels pale this week; but brain has little gold thrills in it. It may be April; and it *might* be Poetry. And I pray it may be both. I am pining away for my own Canzone!

The Sun be with you; and mindful blessings from

Your constant heart

J. P.

To Lillian Shuman

O MY ABSENT DEAR! 12 *April*, 1905

. . . I'm still struggling over Act II. But ah, it is good to be getting deeper and deeper into a long and hard piece of my OWN WORK. And it is fun to be writing a hemi-demi-semi-philosophic Comedy. I make somebody say a thing

[1] Her seal, on a wing design.

12 October
1905

Saturday then, for a few hours, wherever you choose, dear L. Thats no wishes, save for a bright sky and golden trees. — If the Sun wont shine, I just Winna go. — And that ought to annoy the solar system!

I feel deeply, and I pause to consider and decide, 'But *this* is too serious for a Comedy.' So I flop it over, like a penny, and it is great fun to discover, always, the fantastic obverse to a serious thing that makes it possible to *touch*, before people. So 'tis a pleasant problem, and I companion myself with The Man in it, who understands me all day long, and makes love to me in a manner fit to melt an obelisk and quiet an armful of wings! I'll send you, in a day or so, some advance sheets of the May 'Harper's,' with my one-act play therein. Don't turn up your nose at it because there is a monk there and a visionary Madonna. Wait patiently and see what happens — with my love and best wishes! — I have sworn (notwithstanding the examples of Jephthah and Herod) to finish a first draught of my prose comedy before Easter. And then will I fall upon my 'Masque of Psyche' (poetry again), while the Comedy is cooling for a second draught. — And while the lyricism of the 'Masque' is simmering, I mean to start a Poetry Play — Five Acts — no, Four — Big, big, big enough to live in; and while I'm finishing the three at once, I shall feel alive again! I relate all this, my Ever Dear, to show you that I'm working; and you may assume, when I'm once fairly inside a dream house and it rises higher and higher about my ears — that I'm Happy. . . .

Ever yours

JOSEPHINE

To George P. Baker

23 June, 1905

DEAR MR. BAKER:

. . . we know the audiences [1] were deeply impressed; and I, as author, am immensely refreshed to have it proved to my eyes and ears that they were deeply impressed *exactly* where I felt they would be, when I wrote the first draught. That's immensely 'more power to my elbow.' I felt, too, very manifest to our audience, as a poet, those evenings;

[1] The production of '*Marlowe*' at the opening of the theatre at Agassiz House, Radcliffe College.

and it gave me a quite indescribable peace to see the poetry go home. . . . Whether or no the Wolf must gnaw at my heels and throat much longer, — I know I have been manifest for three days at least; and that is much.

Yours ever sincerely

JOSEPHINE PEABODY

To Lionel S. Marks

26 *July*, 1905

DEAR L.:

. . . My hostess is one of my chief creatures in the world. She is aged (I suppose, under my breath); white-haired, and fragile as a cloud. But tho' she is the softest thing the air ever blew over and didn't blow out — and something like snow warmed in swan's-down — it makes me smile, to know that your trappers and cow-boys and simplified wild men couldn't talk with her ten minutes without perceiving and being fired by her invincible — and even untouchable — courage, illumined as it is with the far-seeing gleam of humor that has transcended all kinds of grief and horrors. It's the way thistle-down defies a tomahawk. . . .

PART II
MIDDLE LIFE

PART II

MIDDLE LIFE

If poverty and lack of artistic stimulation were the obstacles before Josephine Peabody's youth, what difficulties met her in the middle period of her life?

A happy marriage gave her the daily, understanding companionship she had craved. Her husband wrote: 'She is now quite another person from the one I had known before and I think probably very different from what you have known. Her normal condition now is one of glee and joyousness — sustained at a greater brilliancy than I had thought possible — full of enthusiastic appreciation, full of a tingling sparkle that is delightful to behold.'

She rejoiced in the expansion of her individual life into the universal experiences of womanhood. Public appreciation of her work enlarged her audience and brought her praise and honors. Her sympathies for the causes of Labor, of Suffrage, and of Peace took practical form in speech as well as in writing. Her babies grew to children. Her home was always hospitable. To young poets she gave instant and comprehending aid.

All this meant expenditure of time and energy. Writing in the quiet of her attic study was often unattainable, crowded out by duties. 'I have chosen my work — it is miscellaneous angelhood, secondly poetry,' she wrote in a moment of discouragement. She was conscious of the challenge to the artist in her academic surroundings, of which William Vaughn Moody had written her — 'Cambridge, generous as it is, and comely as are its words and ways, is dangerous to whatever in life or in art is crescent, burgeoning.' Yet in these years she wrote her best-known work — 'The Book of the Little Past'; 'The Piper,' the Stratford Prize Play, produced in England by the Benson Company in 1910, and in New York at the New Theatre,

in 1911; 'The Singing Man' ('Poems dubbed sociological by those who didn't like 'em'); 'The Wolf of Gubbio' (poetic play); and 'The Harvest Moon' (poems of war and woman).

For years, through much suffering, and two severe operations, she gallantly mastered pain, turning a smiling face to the world, and forcing herself to her work with unflinching will. 'To ponder and scheme over the Spinner Book for one day has put more stamina in me than two years of doctors' bills . . . for I notice that the ability to concentrate feels as fresh, positive, and tenacious a thing as the growth of new tissue for health's sake and the mere sensation of holding on to an idea again is a lovely thing I haven't possessed for more than two years and over.' Until the last six years of her life she was pain's conqueror.

It is possible that her genius could work only in flashes. Her diaries show that inspiration came uncalled to a mind 'a-glimmer,' or suddenly 'it thundered on the left and then things happen.' It may be that duties and pain were not obstacles, after all. But they sapped vitality. This period of her life shows her as a strong flame, bent by repeated blasts, but ever recovering to burn upward.

FULL TIDE

1906–1916

'No joy possible to mind awake that has not something creative about it.'

'Ideals of Poetry for Housekeepers:
I. Say Rhythm to yourself instead of Routine.
II. Look upon the Calendar as your Book of Holidays, Saints and Heroes.
III. Make-believe that you are the lost Pleiad and keep in time with your immortal sisters.'

'So pain can't have me, till I'm caught by the collar; and pain shan't have me the moment I can break free again. But I'll have all the treasures out of her caves and her towers . . . and there will be another Terror knocked out of the way.'

'We are not to be bounded by our sex. My sex is not the sum of me. I can live all around it.'

THE DAILY MAGIC[1]

You are beautiful to me — and I am beautiful to you. You leave me, and your spiritual presence grows lovelier and lovelier, as the clothing, concrete details grow dim. I see you again, and for an instant, I am at a loss: — your tangible personality comes with a sense of strangeness: your voice is strange, at moments, and unlike you. What is 'You'? I see it — I see it, and I believe in it — the central, abiding You that is to develop and develop until it reaches and envelops and simplifies this material surface of You. . . . But am I dismayed? I disappointed? Shall I say, 'This outside, less lovely one, subject to the thousand influences of the moment, both moments known and unknown to me — is the abiding? That other one a dream?' Never — never — never. I know it: and it cannot refuse the one only call of Love, which is recognition. And it comes forth — like moonrise.

The inexorable ways of the God-fact that wills us to be ever-growing . . . See, I had striven and I had attained an inch or two — and without conscious idleness I was resting in a little valley of admiration and good words — half-persuaded that, at my best, I was a spirit of comeliness: — half-persuaded that I was trying my utmost. And now you come and tell me how wonderful I am . . . and I see that the wonder of it is my slothful ignobleness beside what you think me and what I would be.

[1] Found among her papers.

The one fair abiding thing in me is the instinct of honesty. I cannot be happy in undeserved praise: but I will not part with it: so there is no way but to grow. Do not wake out of your vision of what God meant me to be before I have grown Beautiful indeed.

The simple miracle is — that when you look at me and I look back, I AM beautiful for that one while. I anticipate myself.

April 9, 1906. Letter from the Bishop this morning,[1] very courteous and sincere, but, it also seemed to me, extremely guarded. He couldn't do anything about it, he said, etc., etc. He did not really say much 'cause there wasn't really anything left to say. . . . My Dear and I read it respectfully in the afternoon, and latterly danced about the room and praised heaven that we did not have to be bishops.

May, 1906. Everything all sparkles.

November, 1906. We had much lovely talk about unlovely matters, as we always do.

November, 1906. Still lockjaw of the mind. I try and try to work: and cannot. L—— comforts me with many words of a right wiseness, the blessed one.

Again, again, again! — And, oh, bliss and comfort, I evoke some sounds of tuning from this rusty pipe! Two little long-begun, last spring songs in some wise clad . . . oh, tune up, tune up, tune up, Piper! There are so many things to be said and sung!

. . . I set my teeth and do make a sonnet about Pæstum. . . . Says the German calendar this day, 'was du gutes gethan, vergiss, und thu 'was besseres.'

So I fall upon the cold sonnet and do things to it. It is not Better, but it is something and, Himmel knows, I must get through this horrible spell of silence and rusty creakings. . . . Struggles to work — struggles to work. It is a dreadful frostbound hopelessness in my mind: and all the time I know it is lack of Faith, just, and that it was never Faith in *myself*, just, that let me work so joyously. Why does it not lift?

[1] Regretting the impossibility of omitting the word 'obey' in the marriage service.

. . . I walk the room, I smoke, and instead of finishing anything I've begun, I think of these new ones. But that's something.

. . . I do succeed in finishing up two of the Harper sequence: 'Market' and 'Little Side Streets.'

. . . I do finish two and begin another! Three cheers: small as they are.

January, 1907. Good Morning and Good Morning. And God be with us every day and all day long. Here we look back upon our First Year together: and so the happiest year that ever was, for us. And may it go on from moon to honey-moon.

I gave my Dear two Sonnets, one that I made for him yesterday and one I finished this morning. And there was a delicious snow-storm. And there was singing.

January, 1907. I spent the day reading through 'The Wayfarers' and noting the alterations that I must make: i.e., mostly the 'Ye's' and such like things, with here and there a dreamy word where a live one should be. Now, indeed, I must have some work to show for every day, else it will be bad for me, indeed. I must get on with my Great Schemes! I must lay hold of some strength. I must spread six wings.

To Ridgely Torrance

BERLIN, 27 *January*, 1907

MY DEAR RIDGELY:

. . . My stupidity over the German tongue disappointed me rather. I can understand most of what's said; but I feel dispirited about really *learning* the old thing. It's such a ridiculous four-footed *sprache*, with the most plodding, material point of view evident in seven words out of eight. I like the beer (!) better than the speech. And I like the people better than I'm willing to. But no matter how many *individuals* appeal to me, the race of them stays where it was in my mind. (French people repel me acutely; and it will be ever so. Mentally and physically I can't abide 'em.) German cleanness — cities, people, food —

is a wonder in itself and a municipal copy-book. But they are singularly devoid of charm, for all that. To the Italians — clean or dirty — honest or villainous! — we are both drawn; always excepting the well-dressed 'ladies' of the upper classes who are curiously homely, brazen, and devoid of ideas. The peasants and servants and padrones were one and all delightful. . . .

February 2, 1907. And she fell upon her work with intent to begin — to begin — to begin: and jumped into the middle of the third act of the II II[1] and wrote Hatches of text all over it with great good-will. A beginning, yo ho! A beginning!

February 12. Shrove Tuesday — New Moon — Carnival! So, to prepare a good Lent and a joyous Easter, I plunged into my play, and did — with helter-skelter, any kind of text, blank verse, the blankest, for motion and events, — write straight through the First Act.

February 15. Begin on Scene ii of Act II with glee continuous.

More — more —

9 P.M. Finish Act II! (Of course 'tis the scrubbiest draught without a line as it will stand in the end — still — writ.)

February 16. By afternoon I have done a good third of it, and planned things clearlier for the last act: and chuckled myself into a mild fever.

February 18. Finish two thirds of Act III.

February 22. Héjà! To work by 10.30 of the clock. Write steadily and do

Finish

the first draught of the Fourth Act and therewith the whole Play

of the Πιεδ Πιπερ Δ

February, 1907. I fall upon notes for shorter poems to cheer myself concerning work: and I plan a name and nature for a new Liederbuch that greatly pleases me, if I can ever do it.

[1] *The Piper.*

February 27. The Song-Book is planned more fully — and I scribble a first song.

To Mrs. Charles K. Peabody

DEAREST MOTHER: LONDON, 24 *May*, 1907

We have just returned from one week in Birmingham to these lodgings and to hard work and many sources of excitement. And before I plunge into the thousand engagements and the million hours of writing, I must quench your suspense and tell you how perfectly lovely all my new family has been to me. — As I have just been writing to my sweet mother-in-law, I expected them to try to love me, but I never expected anybody to do it with such ease, completeness, and spontaneity. Every member of that (large) family, and a number of unsuspected aunts and cousins, all received me with the most generous, simple, and enthusiastic affection. That is easy for distant relations. But when you consider that L.'s mother, who is *devoted* to him, doesn't see him but for a glimpse now and then in a couple of *years*, it becomes wonderful. And when I go home, you'll have not only me but *her* son on that side of the sea, and in the same town *all the time*. Just think of that from *her* point of view; and you'll think your lot is better than you've thought. — Excuse me for moralizing; but it strikes me most vividly. I think her not only a Spartan mother (for, of course, she is used to going without Lionel by this time), but I think she showed angelic sweetness to be so pleased with me, myself, and to make me feel it as acutely as she did. They *all* did; but, of course, it means most to her. She seemed to accept our relation to each other as one ideally to her mind; and I feel that she is personally (as L. says too) exceedingly happy over it; and that she will continue to be happy and happier, thinking about us. I'm awfully sorry that she must do so much thinking and so little seeing; but I feel very happy, indeed, over our visit as a whole. *Everybody* is in high tune with it. I told them all about you and Marion, particularly and

at great length L.'s mother, to whom you must naturally seem a very fortunate woman — (if you like us) to have your daughter and her son living soon cheek by jowl in Cambridge. And I need not suggest to you that a little note from you to her, about her beautiful treatment of me, would give me equal pleasure. They all behaved alike in their affection and consideration. By consideration I mean that we never *once* had to hear a *single* foolish, jocular, or sentimental personality about honeymoons or young married people or anything of the kind; — of the cheapening and odious kind that relations and old friends think they can permit themselves. And that seems to me the topmost reach of good taste and pleasantness. I really cannot thank them too much. Among so *many* relations it simply wasn't to be thought of that nobody should do or say anything silly and jarring. But nobody did. . . .

May, 1907. . . . And prayers to the Lord to bless my work and my tongue and my heart and soul, and to make me justify my existence, with things of help and beauty.

To Amy Marks

LONDON, 8 *July*, 1907

DEAR AMY:

The more I brush the cobwebs from my simple brain, and contemplate the *Beautiful Book*, the more I'm persuaded that I am the Victim of a Hoax! — Why did I believe you? 'Cause I was so trustin'. Why did you deceive me? 'Cause you were so unprincipled. Why did I receive this Book? 'Cause it was so Beautiful.

You *must not*, Sister, *any more* of this extravagance. It will give me pain. But I want you to know that, without condoning your conduct in any respect, I think it is a lovely, enchanting book, of an adorable and beloved play; and I shall show it off with as much pride as if I thought it right of you to give it to me!

(But I don't.)

Yours lovingly

JOSEPHINE

July, 1907. Who turns out to be the most hospitable man of letters, the most prompt to reply to a note, and the most considerately mindful of me and my 'Marlowe'? Thomas Hardy; with a letter and kind words and complimentary sayings and the three books, *signed*.

July, 1907. Disappointing interview with Skinner. (But the Morning sense came to me early, which do comfort me much. And may I never forget the things I heard in a still small voice.)

August, 1907. To Stirling we were bent. But it pours and darkles and glowers: fit to make Noah burst out crying. We retract our orders to the porters and creep back to our room where we ply our several tasks; L. sits up close to the bureau, writing heroically on *Dust Prevention* and *Tar Macadam*. I roost upon a trunk and correct proof and Pipers with a stubborn spirit and a fountain pen (Edinbro — Edinbro! Stirling for aye!)

September, 1907. Staffa —— AND —— IONA.

And to-day, the clearest day of the whole summer from morning till night — we sailed — we sailed — we sailed — a Beatific Journey. I took my Dear to Staffa and Iona. . . . And we saw all the glories of the earth and of the sea and of the firmaments from Ben Nevis (with snow on his head) to the coast of Ireland, from Staffa to the Isle of Skye and the Cuchullin Hills, we saw it!

—— And on Iona, I found a piece of the Stone, as clear as jade, fresh-left by the tide in a rock pool, for my Dear. And on Staffa, we walked together over the broken columns, from the Clam Shell Cave to Fingal's. And I climbed down — and dipped my long amber string in the waters of Fingal's Cave. Yes, and my Green Stone, and my rings upon my hands, with all manner of glee . . . and coming back we sate together on the Throne of Fingal and wished the magic wishes. — And it was all beautiful, all, all, and a Dream Fulfilled.

September, 1907.

Awake up, my Glory. Awake, lute and harp. I myself will awake right early. — And so I did — the most

marvellous day! We landed at 9.30 and got through the customs within a couple of hours and went home with Mother and Marion. Home that L. had never seen — and a thousand times lovelier than I remembered or imagined, one bower of flowers, too. I broke bread (according to Gaelic custom) before I went upstairs.

— A marvellous, shining day.

September, 1907. Up at 5.30 again and lying awake among a nest of cookery books. We are both lamed with up and down stairs — but oh, how happy and gay! . . . We admire everything we have. . . . Our first Sunday Dinner — a consummate chicken that fell to pieces with loving kindness and didn't have to be carved.

. . . Busy — busy — I feel like a housewifely Vision of Ezekiel, with six wings!

And in the evening, Guess what! Our first *Wood Fire* . . . and lo! it burned instantly; it spread triumphant wings; it soared to heaven and blazed and sang and went not down.

To Mrs. S. E. Marks

18 LANCASTER STREET, CAMBRIDGE
28 *September*, 1907

DEAR MADRE:

At last, I Take My Pen in Hand regardless of the million other things that ought to be done, and the rainbow confusion in this beatific living-room. I don't know *where* to begin. But it may as well be at the beginning; and of all Beginnings, this has been the most completely happy and delightful. We landed at Boston at 9.30 in the morning, Thursday the 19th, and met my mother and sister — and the customs officers (all happily and without dashing our glee in gate-legged tables and the like), and we drove to Cambridge and alighted at the door of

OUR house

'Twas a bower of flowering wild things in the open fireplaces and all about; and Our Maggie stood ready to wel-

come us and set forth our lunch when we needed it. According to Gaelic superstitions, I broke bread before I went upstairs, which is the proper thing for a Bride to do in her own house.

As for Lionel — who had never seen the house — he was very nearly agape with pleasure and astonishment; and it was like the Arabian Nights to walk all over with him, from room to room — and find our wedding gifts everywhere about — and hiding in bureau drawers; and to find a row of my old thin gowns freshly done up, and dangling from hooks in my dressing-room. *Such* a house! — I don't know how we shall come down to small space after it; but we rejoice and spread ourselves over the present. It is a *large* house, much larger than I knew or even suspected; and its closet room (I've explained the American closet to Lizzie) is *enormous*. Not a wardrobe blocks the landscape; but there are pantries, store-rooms, clothes-closets — storage nooks, beyond anything I ever beheld. The rooms are all spacious, and, as for conveniences, we have everything, from a kitchen-porch, vine-covered, to a safe (for silver) and a great big bath-room with a porcelain tub of heavenly size; and a big light laundry! The owners had moved everything that could impair our freedom, out of the way, and emptied every desk, even; we have more room than we need or want.

The house is a *corner* one (the other corner is Humboldt Street — where my mother and sister live, not far) and so bowered with the street trees that it seems almost secluded. We have sunlight all day long in many windows; and pleasant prospects everywhere. I hope to send you some pictures in my next letter; so I won't attempt drawings for descriptions in this one; for there isn't time. But Lionel is simply *delighted* with the house, and so am I, and our first days of unpacking and hard work and hot weather have been an unalloyed delight and romance; and I need not say more.

My mother had ordered our first dinner; but I assumed the reins of government even on the evening of the 19th,

and, considering all things, we have had a glorious time — specially chuckling over our meals, and using for the first time any amount of lovely belongings; — Katie's salts and your Sheffield pitcher. We used *that* for the Sauce of Our First Sunday Chicken; and behold, it was very Good! And you ought to see Montague's rug in the drawing-room. It is a perfect treasure and everybody agrees. Pater's beautiful tortoiseshell dish stands at present on the drawing-room table (at your elbow as you enter, not in the middle) and the light from a west window strikes through it. My mother and sister were in raptures over all of the things. Lizzie's chest (the Canterbury one!) is a dream of beauty; and Lionel has just set up the second gate-leg table. Pater Dear, they are angelic dreams, both of them; and several admiring neighbors have viewed them with 'wonder, love and praise' already. The big one, irrationally placed in the middle of the living-room, just now, groans under a load of our gifts, waiting to be assorted. The smaller one, folded, stands in the dining-room as a serving-table, and has a collection of foreign coffee-pots on it. They are *altogether* beautiful, and we are as proud and pleased as we can be.

You may imagine how complicated and incessant has been our unpacking; but we have enjoyed it beyond all our expectations, even. I was almost alarmed — the first day and night — at the amount of our possessions. We seem to have more silver than we realized, or quite know what to do with; and I woke up at 3.30 A.M. and thought I heard burglars, and explored the house for them. But I take it more calmly now; and only rise at 5.30 to promenade the house, pleasurably, and survey my enchanting belongings by the light of dawn! — (L. may laugh, but he is exactly as wise and foolish. He couldn't be dragged out of the house for three whole days, fond as he is of exercise; and that excitement of descending to extract fine fresh eggs out of his own ice-chest, and squeeze lemon on them out of his own store of lemons, and put 'em down his own particular throat, this seems to him the most desirable of all quick

lunches for a hard-working man, a-toiling to support two gate-legged tables.) In brief, everything has been beautiful and gleeful and happy beyond *our wildest dreams;* and I wish with all my heart you'd come walking in, this minute, to see how true is all I'm telling you.

With dearest love to you all and constant thought. Bless you. More of this as soon as maybe.

Your loving daughter

JOSEPHINE

October, 1907. Oh, but it's a curious new kind of veil I feel around and over myself now with the dear familiar ——, who always knew how to laugh with me through our hardest years — I feel helplessly apart in the richness of my Present.

October, 1907. Blessèd be God. And blessèd be this House: and all that we shall ever do, or say, or sing, within it or without. For I can do nothing else but sing a new song all day long unto His hearing, not knowing what to make of so much Light.

October, 1907. I oversee an Italian rechauffé for our dinner and behold it is very good. Then L. gives me a lesson on the typewriter. And he brings me a card catalogue for Cookery!! Ahai! I always knew it would be adorable — housekeeping. (O blessed sense! What days we are living now. How on earth could one ever taste of the wonders of it all without having been a lost, exhausted, tortured, worn-out Cinderella!)

October, 1907. *Day of Promised Beginning* to work in My Study. So I do it. . . . I overhaul papers; write orders for myself; and bask like a fly in amber in the Godlike boon of sun from every window; — the thing that, more than all other things, makes me glad to the ground of my feet. And I read in Saint Augustine's 'Confession,' the most marvellous book that has delighted me for years and years and years.

October, 1907. Never did I behold anything more lovely by land or sea, than just this day in this country of Golden

Trees.[1] Sparkling air, so clear, one could not think — one could only Breathe and Long and Glory — trees, trees — golden, saffron, peachy, topaz, jacinth. A sky one blue Nirvana.

October, 1907. Crispin's Day and glorious weather. Read Sabatier and praise God that anything so wonderful as the Life of Saint Francis has happened to mortal men to measure things by and to pour abasement and contempt and ecstasy upon our spirits.

October, 1907. I go to the Faculty Ladies' first tea of the season and add my Cricket-Song to the Niagara-noise of their collective voices, and view the other brides.

October, 1907. I am still reading at the Lives of Saints and they do make me mad to be at something — the indefinable uncatchable Something-More that I ought to be doing — and doing the more — and longing the more to do — *because* We are so Happy.

I listen, day after day, hoping that I shall hear some word of this, proceeding out of the mouth of God.

November, 1907. Oh, it is a wonderful thing, this having a House — or, not that, but this Living in a Harmony, with nothing to fight, save the snares of sunny idleness.

November, 1907. My study is a Persian garden for the sick. The sun pours in at every window: and the rug is as a turf of violets in the shadow of pine-trees. And, lo, the goodly seats go round about the wall. It's the nicest place in the house which is *all* nice. (Thou art all fair, my House; there is no spot in thee.)

December, 1907. And the blessèd year of 1907 is going — going — how can I let it go?

Wunderjahr — Wunderjahr. . . . This evening we opened the little porcelain flask of Certosa from our wandering and we drank blessings and pledges and wishes over each other's shoulders in a special way. And we light again the tapers on our Tree. God bless the Year and bless the New.

[1] Wellesley College.

To Lillian Shuman

3 January, 1908

DEAREST LIL:

I was so glad — in a way — that you did *not* know the Shropshire Lad; tho' I am amazed at the chance. I feared you must have five editions of him, and thought the autograph was all my gift would amount to. But I adore the book; and think it one of the most original and poignantly lovable things to be found in lyric poetry, for the sake of the tone, the freshness, the consummate simplicity, and the human pathos of the best. I hope you like it too, and that the autograph may so 'acquire merit' in time! . . .

January, 1908. The coldest day of winter; windy, zero weather. But my study like a lump of amber with the sun, and I a happy gnat therein.

February, 1908. I endeavored at the N. poem,[1] and falling short of it, I took comfort from the making of a Spanish omelet. And thus the domesticities run to the relief of Art in distress.

April, 1908. My own Dearest, beside whom ANY Third (saving the Lord) must needs seem an Interloper and an Intruder and a Usurper. And I will say it, too, for it's how it feels.

April, 1908. Unsettled days, these. I am trying with all my heart to understand the New thing. But I think now — I've got to wait for my own nature. The best I can be — about this — is merely submissive and vacant of spirit, and trustful of the New feelings to suit the crisis. Nothing more is honest, now, at all. I feel in a sense solitary and far off in the world of Experience from My blessed Dearest. And it is not a feeling to cause me a moment's happiness.

May, 1908. . . . Such high spirits — such light feet, all these astonishing days. Thank Heaven, the change is over my mind too — and our delight grows with the reality of the thing. Never, *never* did I shut my mind against it; but

[1] *Nightingale Unheard.*

I had to wait for a sense of understanding, of actuality. For I've been such a child towards God and the earth, all my years, that the natural sequence of times and things is a marvel to me, always.

May, 1908. Héjà! I've trapped the *Foreword* and the *Afterword* for my 'Book of the Little Past.'

. . . We decided not to have a single adult word in the Book. So we cut the Foreword and we cling to the Last Word. . . . And I'm going to call the Dedication 'To Z.'

May, 1908. Every morning now I waken and hear the small bird-voices swell like a tide, as the light grows — and burst into earth-whelming song — a perfect delirium of the good things of the trees and the sky and the sun. And the blueness twinkles and sparkles through the eddying green of the chestnut-boughs, all lighted with shining white candles.

Blessed little Z — you ought to be — with such pure joy behind you and around you! He seems to me like something lighted from the Sun.

May, 1908. O but these are splendid days. If our First Born isn't an Armful of Chuckles, there's nothing in heredity. He must have Begun when I was so filled with the October sunlight setting my own happiness a-sparkle that I could do nothing at all but run about this house with wings on my heels, making a merry noise unto the Lord. And he became a Certainty when the earth quickened; and wonder made him too unreal to mean anything but strangeness for a time. And he became a Joy, with the flowering of all things. — But the petals are all blowing away now; and the Joy grows — and that was the next word that was to proceed 'out of the mouth of God.'

August, 1908. The trumpets sounded about midnight of the 29th. But our child was not born until five o'clock, the afternoon of the 30th,[1] and the most terrible day of her father's and mother's life.

Now that it is over — I would not for anything . . .

[1] July, 1908.

give up the awfulness of it. For I am wiser in the height and the depth, for this knowledge of the almost inconceivable agony. It is enough to make one tenderer forever towards all the natures in all the world and to save one's soul from Impudence world without end. . . .

Surely, it is Birth that makes a woman feel like the Ash-Tree Ygdrasil, somehow. I can never forget — or explain — that apocalyptic hugeness of the thing: all thoughts and visions turned into Pain and making signs and wonders. . . .

Whatever the Pain was, I saw and felt and heard and knew Love was greater than it (oh, but I was glad to *know* that, beside saying and believing it). . . . It felt like sounding for once the things that are in Human Nature, and finding out that Deepest and that Highest, deeper and higher than the Utmost Evil.

August, 1908. It was strange beyond anything to look at her familiar face across this distance of experience — the most far-off making experience of all that I have had; it opens such a new heaven and new earth, and a world of heart-piercing realities. L and I have crossed the abyss now: and we look about and see and hear in the New World of those who have children or, rather, those who have had a child. The firstness of it is the thunderbolt.

August, 1908. The overwhelming paradox of it all, too, is strange to one's brain and heart.

That anything so wonder-small and wonder-soft and helpless and exquisite should come of anything so cruel and unimaginable as Birth. After that Fire and that Whirlwind — that still small voice. After a day-long battle with a thousand tortures and thunders and ruins, that helpless wee drifted shell, that handful of a flower-colored breathing creature, with a head that feels like the new velvet on the horns of the little deer.

August, 1908. So, for a birthday treat, we brought in the Baby, at sundown; and her thermodynamic father and ultra-poetic mother presented to her gaze her very first open wood fire. And she saw that it was Good.

She lay (semi-clad) like a small pink changeling, staring at it with pleased eyes and stretching out her wee feet like periwinkles.

August, 1908. Anything as exquisite as our Baby was never seen; especially when she is taken away, sleeping, from her mother's breast. With her bright eyes shut and elfish looks placid, she is a perfect Andrea della Robbia Bambino (only more beautiful) — lifted away with backward-drooping head; her mouth parted in a kitten-like triangle, above her little pointed chin; and wonderful flame-tipped fingers always spread out in her sleep (tremulously alive to the air, as a swimmer's to the water) — hands reaching a moment flutteringly, and then curling up toward her breast, with two little lifted forefingers that point to say 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

September, 1908. This day the Baby saw a kitten for the first time. I was nursing her when they brought up the Angora . . . and held it suspended over our bed. The Baby removed her lips from my breast, and stared at the kitten till the whites of her eyes were visible above the iris, and the funniest expression of visible amazement came over her — as who should say, 'Outlandish creature! And yet delightful, sure enough. But did I ever in my life! And *She* has fur!'

September, 1908. To-day I rose up and partly gave the Baby her bath; . . . The first one is strenuous. It's like dressing a Delsarte caterpillar of alarming size and muscular energy. I must learn it in sections.

September, 1908. . . . Quaveringly putting on the robes of authority and trying to realize that this duck-haired, kitten-blue-eyed, wild-rose-colored Baby is mine — my girl child Alison.

. . . To-day I am left alone with the Baby — a Mother in Authority — a trembling household Cæsar!

September, 1908. 'Book of the Little Past' is out to-day: and I have a first notice of it and a very nice one too.

. . . The Baby weighs nine pounds to-day and has gained nine ounces this week. Lyrical diet agrees with her.

I cannot imagine a woman not *wanting* to feed her own Baby. Imagine missing all that mystery and providence.

October, 1908. Baby slept last night . . . unbrokenly! And this morning I did hide me in a grove of MSS. and think upon a Poem.

This morning I settled the 'Long Lane' and sent it off. This afternoon Lionel brought home an armful of

Brown Paper

inviting beyond words. Now will I write!

October, 1908. Write some more, with mingled glee and serenity. It's coming back, the possibility of keeping my mind on something for an hour at a time. I feel as if I had some roof and shelter to my brain.

October, 1908. Ahai — the star-gazing of our young days was tame in comparison with this richest of all things, turning over in our human hands — but still with eyes of faith — the good fabric of Real Life and all the wonders it has to show, thus far.

October, 1908. Still all tangled up in the Nightingale poem, 'cause I tear up five versions of every stanza. But I am having the most heavenly enjoyment of thinking poetry again.

. . . Heavenly business of writing again — this hour and a half that I can get in the morning. A chip came off the Nightingale poem: and turned into a lyric by itself: which I made haste to scribble down and tuck in my belt to warm my heart and hand to L. across the lunch-table before it grew cold.

. . . Write some more. Read; rest: — gloat.

Callers: talk: more writing — Sense of a fly in amber (*Me* the fly).

October, 1908. Héjà! This is Living! My little wee Duck-Angel wakes all chuckles.

. . . I sit in the corner of our study: and do *settle*, write, and *doggedly finish* (pro tem.) a medium-longish poem: and scribble on another; and stop; just to take breath, and Feel how good it feels!!!

To Frederic F. Sherman

CAMBRIDGE, 29 *October*, 1908

MY DEAR SHERMANS!

What a lovely surprise in this 'Miscellany' that comes to me! Of course I turned at once to the Sonnet, first of all; but so unaware. Thank you a thousand times for the threefold — fourfold pleasure of it — The Sonnet on the Binding — The Binding on the Book — the Sonnet on the Book inside the Binding — and the House that Fred(eric) built! — Aside from my personal delight in it, it's a very lovely sonnet. My husband was most pleased; and so was — or will be

(Now *have* you heard?)

—— my daughter Alison? ——

Yes, I have a *Wunderkind* — a wee bit Alison — who still seems to us New-Born, though she's three months old to-morrow. And at this very moment she reposes — no, she fairly sits up, like a heavy-headed rose — in the arms of my (Irish) Lizzie, while I write to you, and fixes her eyes on the lamp here, and then on me — and utters a coo-pigeon command to be taken up and carried. She's the most adorable, mysterious bundle of sleep and chuckles and long thoughts that ever entered this dwelling. And *her* binding, too, is a miracle of beauty.

Do write and let me have some news of yourselves and of 42 West 39th Street. I have not been able — as you'll guess — to think of any poems at all, on *Books!* Else you would have had some. But 'The Book of the Little Past' is out! (It was dedicated to Alison when she was twelve hours old.) And I have taken my Pen in Hand this very week, to make some new poems (long in mind); and I have made three — 'Nother to-morrow, I hope. If so, I must not babble longer now . . .

November, 1908. This day, this first Sunday in Advent — our Baby was christened.

'New Moon, — Honey Moon
Slender as the Bride,
How can moon-lit lovers know
All the years may hide?'
Blessed are they, even so!
Blessed now and long ago.
Young Moon, — Moon aglow
In a heaven so wide.

—

Late Moon, — Harvest Moon
With your stars beside,
Sing, above the wax-and-wane,
How the Lights abide.
Blessed now and long ago!
Then they trusted. Now they know.
Shine, sing, forever so,
Moon above the tide.

—

To the Lady in the Moon
and her True Love.
5 December
— 1908.

. . . And he poured on her darling little head the water from the river Jordan, out of a shell. . . . She looked like a little shining angel in a fair linen garment, and held her head up high and hoveringly, to gaze out of the window upon the crescent moon, one week old, that shined upon her, back again.

January, 1909. What does the Lion of the House do but inveigle me into his den and let me relate my shoppings and my nothings with a tale as long as Juliet's nurse . . . and then he gets me to ask him questions that bring to light at length and at last that he is appointed Full Professor. Then I skerried and screeled like our Baby when she tries to be a peacock.

January, 1909. Frittered thoughts for me — kitchen-quarrels and a whole cloud-burst of petty domesticity: just by way of sample, however, and to walk on, gently, sagely.

Both L. and I discourse at even of the possibilities of Simplification for Females.

Men don't have to worry over it. It's tailored for them: so they can be both neat and high-minded at short notice.

January, 1909. I am doing nothing at all, at all, just now. For with the Bimbo's surpassing strength and acrobatic life I am feeling spent.

(And well spent — *well-spent!* No better way to be spent, in the world. Poetry *any* year, but only this *first* year of the Bimbo's life.)

To Lionel S. Marks

24 *February*, 1909

DEARLY BELOVED:

Bright weather home with you and after you! I've just spent a most interesting morning, hearing several chapters of A. M.'s[1] Book; and I'm glad to say I think I heartened her with blowing of the bellows for that same afflatus. Also, I could help her with some points. She has been so full

[1] Amy Murray.

of conscience about her work that her notes for it comprise whole histories of the Isles and lords of the Isles, and things Viking and Gaelic, and Jacobite and Early Christian! It is going to be a beautiful book, I am certain; and makes me quite mad for sight of the Isles again.

(O precious thing, what a good time we had, didn't we? And wouldn't our Bimbo make friends over there with humans, and heather, and sheep-dogs and Ayrdales, and ferrymen and sea-gulls and weather gleams???)

Come home when you Must, my Dearest, and a good thing it will be to see you. I send you everything there is. And the Bimbo sends you:

3 Bumpy kisses
1 little lick
4 small little smiles
1 very wide smile
1 beautiful rose-vermilion clutch, 5-pointed,
3 chuckles, and
a wiggle.

Your own

February, 1909. . . . I could no longer endure the tantalizing sight of an old Blue Harp in the window, apparently a small Irish harp . . . it turned out to be no antique, and modest enough in material: still — a Harp — a blue Harp — a little Irish Harp, colored blue, mind you, and picked out with gold, here and there. . . . And here, here, here

Comes the Harp!

And a key to tune it with; and twenty thousands Joys.

February, 1909. I take the harp up to my bedroom every night where I can see the shape of it when I wake, and sit up in bed and tune it in the morning!

February, 1909. Early Babe and early harp. . . . Sign the Suffrage petition. Wash the Baby.

Get out the 'Piper' again to prepare copies once more. . . . And tune the harp the whole blessed evening.

March, 1909. Harp isn't home yet. It has four Ole Bull strings on it and more Amy Murray strings and tomorrow it acquires some Oliver Ditson strings. . . .

And in the afternoon Lionel goes after it, brings it back, and strings the last octave for me himself!

Oh, glorious evening with a Blue Harp in the House all mine. And I tune it up!!

. . . And I tune it again. And I tune it late and early. Between other duties and diversions.

March, 1909. Join the Fabians (as an Associate) today; for the sake of educating myself in the movement, somewhat, and finding out what's being done over there, and over here, and what to do as far as one can.

To Amy Marks

CAMBRIDGE, 15 *March*, 1909

DEAREST AMY:

Never imagine for a moment that I 'wonder why you don't write.' There is no cause for wonder, my dear, in such a useful daily life as yours; and of all things, after I learned from your letter, of the bitter perplexities you've been all but overwhelmed with.

First of all: I am so happy and thankful that you were *not* overwhelmed. It is like what I expected of your heaven-tempered organization (I speak as of the tempering of fine metal); but goodness knows, I couldn't have imagined a trial of such magnitude as this you tell us. Indeed, it does look in this world as if, when all's said, Poverty of the direst is going to be found out the *root* of all Evil. It's easy enough to see what the Housing Problem is accountable for. But it overwhelms me with a sense of worm-like futility to think how I don't think (or don't think to any live purpose) about these things. It's all very easy, indeed, to talk and write and apprehend, at a vague distance, how wretched most people are. But if you can

ever tell your far-off sister anything to do for *you* or yours, in such miscellaneous ways as she could possibly, for Heaven's sake, *do so!* There's nothing on earth that seems to me as much worth while as the sort of work *you* are doing (except when I am nursing Baby Alison, and wishing that she were eleven babies instead of one, FOR THAT HOUR ONLY!). Really, to be helping make the ruddiness and joy of a human creature! — But Baby Alison is only One. And her ruddiness and joy would *seem* (God be praised) to be so much securer than most people's.

In a word now — (this is the 18th by 'now' — which is what happens to all my letters) — scribble to me a word of something on earth I can do for you, or them, and I'll be grateful forever. You were a darling to let me know that the poems had pleased some of them, and lighted up their faces, or helped to. I sent you lately that little first-printed book of mine, that 'Old Greek Stories' which was to serve as a kind of supplement to Hawthorne's 'Tanglewood Tales,' etc. I sent it to you, as a sample, Dear, to try on the children for stories, some day; and if you can find it useful at all, let me know, and I'll send you over more copies to use about in different rooms, unless it's inappropriate.

Also I am sending you a copy of 'The Little Past' for you must have one of your own since you use it there; and how glad I am you do!

Also there is something you can do for me, if you will. — Whenever you run across pamphlet or tract or circular, or anything relating to the social problems — children's or grown folks' — that ought to hurt, or help, or suggest — do mail it to me. You are auspiciously (?) placed to behold and to grapple with the very worst evils on the face of the earth, in some shape — in their most appealing, most dismaying shape, the injury of the growing Young Things. And I am so eager to learn what I can, and see what I could possibly do — if there *is* any good in that futile tribe of 'Boets and Bainters' as the late George III was said to designate 'em — and your little Brother Lionel loves to quote.

I sent the other day for explicit information about the Fabian Society, thinking that a whole set of these papers would at least teach me a great deal that I ought to know. But I haven't them yet. . . .

April, 1909. Still tiresome details of shopping and dentistry. Not, O ye heavenly host, that there is any waning, all these days, of the glory and the dream. But that there is no time to set down, in pen and ink, the multitudinous thoughts and knowledges.

Poor little wistful sapling with her face set toward the western sky, hopefully — what a stretch of time she had to write in, *then* — with nothing in sight but the Long Long Lane. I bless the help and hope of the blank blank paper — and I wish I had the time to use more now for the overflowing record of late fulfilments — that I might square accounts with her and the Angel.

April, 1909. I tune my harp early in bed. Indeed, I do that most mornings. It's such a darling shape that I take it upstairs every night and set it in my bedroom by the window so I can see its adorable prow-like shape of a Something Sailing for Somewhere steadily, steadily — by my heart's compass.

May, 1909. Marion brings me her birthday gift, which is a marvellous pair of full-sized gauze Wings to tie on the Baby; painted in butterfly iridescence of blue, green, violet, and she shows them not until she has herself undressed the Baby and tied them (scarcely noticeably) about her dimpled shoulders; when she brings her in, a sight to make Wm. Shakespeare scream with too-muchness of beauty. She is a thing celestial, made of live apple-blossoms, lighted from the Sun.

June, 1909. (Domestic squalls rising in the kitchen.)

So we resort to weeding to calm our spirits; and wish we could be duly ministered too, Eden-wise — by Voices and Flames of Fire — or zebras and elephants and ravens.

November, 1909. I. This morning I finished 'The Singing Man!' And Lionel read it.

II. And the circulars came, and they are very good.

III. And this evening the First 'Pipers' arrived. And I gave his copy to Lionel!

And Behold, it was a very fine day, indeed.

January, 1910. Cold, cold and bright. Me bodily quiet perforce, and yet some kind of lyrical Tide is high in me, high and strong and buoyant. I feel a Sapphic desire to my harp.

To Katharine Lee Bates

1 *January*, 1910

A happy New Year to you, dearest K. L. B., and thanks with true delight for your lovely 'Kings of the East.' I know what pleasure will be in it, too, for the Bambini, when they can read. For to me it has the true carol color — with glories of Kings and gold, and warmth of manger-hay. I *do not* like Christmas poems to be much etherealized. They go so wide of the mark, for that season especially, which revels with such unascetic sweetness, in concrete earthly-blessed symbols, like Saint Francis over his 'Crib.' . . .

To Mary Mason

2 *January*, 1910

The happy New Year to you, Mary dear, and many, many, many! I was most glad to know that you liked 'The Piper,' and I must hear how Dan likes it too. I think he has accomplished a decided feat in his 'Guide to Music.' For I've been reading it myself with deep interest and consoling my mind (for lack of any such search-light before my own infant steps) with the pleasure I'm going to have, learning beside Alison. Many will say that some of its analogies and reasonings are too old for a child. But I am *firmly* for setting before them, *always*, things with a perspective that does lead away, beyond. And I'm delighted to see that Dan positively drags them by the hair of their head, into perceptions of the kindred things of poetry and painting.

To Amy Marks

CAMBRIDGE, 12 *January*, 1910

DEAR SISTER AMY:

I've never thanked you yet, *yourself*, have I, for the blessed and welcome boxes of menthol trochees, and the splendid books you sent me on the eve of our New York trip. I was full of gratitude, though, Sister Dear, and well I might be. For I had use for *all*. Lionel and I are getting to be more and more associated, in this scholastic region, with progressive and radical ideas — little as we deserve it from what we actually are able to do. But I'm thankful enough, if amused, to find that our unabashed manner of speaking (by authority of *deep feeling* and shallow information as far as statistics go!) makes people regard us with open-mouthed awe, as fiery, social-minded characters. (Such as we are full fain to be, as fast as experience can help us.) I am beginning to see (though I shall *always* be abashed before Workers like you) that it is not the business of *any* poet to slink out of sight as soon as an Economist opens his mouth. *We* know something of the truth — tho' not mathematically; and *you* help me much to have faith in my own opportunities to do *Something*, however small. I'm sending you the latest printed poem (from the January, 1910, 'Atlantic Monthly')[1] and I'm glad to tell you that the people who have read it, so far, were specially moved by the middle and latter stanzas about those whom '*the walls shut in*.' (You'll recognize some of that bright itinerary of the years 1906 and 1907! — I always like the English stanza; it is so true to what we saw, that silver-rainy Spring-time.)

Good-bye! — I'll write to you soon again. It would do you good to see Alison this cold weather (it has ranged from 2° to 12°, 18° and 28° Fahr., this fortnight), but she goes out in the sun every day, stiff with white garments, furry cap, and white wool leggings, like an Angora kitten.

[1] *Nightingale Unheard.*

She comes in all smiles, red as a rose, and warm, from her own breath behind a veil — the most glorious, sparkling child of joy; untiring from morning till night, and adored by *everybody:* postmen, policemen, all passers-by on whom her light shines. Love to you and all, Dear, from your sister

JOSEPHINE

January, 1910. L. went this noon to the Chapel services for our dear Dean Ames — cold and unimpressive they were, too, from what he says, in spite of the love that splendid man had from everybody. What *is* the matter with Unitarians that they neither touch nor solace any one at such a time? I am truly puzzled. Whatever can be said against the narrowness of ritualistic traditions, I can think of nothing whatever so touching, so tremendous, as that one first sentence spoken as they go to meet and receive the mute body — 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' The most denying heart in the world is shattered with strange tears at hearing it and stranger exaltation.

January, 1910. 'Singing Man' back again . . . and without question it is the best poem I ever wrote . . . and the most direct. . . .

February, 1910. These days in great bodily suffering. I cannot record them; though they were full of new things and understandings; and wonders — through agony — that I am glad to remember and keep.[1]

. . . And it struck me always that when one seems to be at the height and depth of awfulness — even then it seems shabby to 'beg off': since there are these things for human nature to endure. And I still maintain, it's better for a poet to suffer than a motorman.

February, 1910. L. let me see a letter that he had, knowing that the things of this world could not then occasion me suspense of any size. News from Stratford that 'The Piper' is one in Seven — Final Seven out of 315 plays.[2]

[1] The birth of her second child.

[2] The Stratford Prize Competition.

March, 1910. The Earthly Paradise — *Home again.*[1]

Brought here very well on a stretcher, in a steam motor-ambulance; with my pretty blue hat on my chest, à la Masonic funeral!

Eden —

My little old narrow bed, in the Study, with a fine blue Liberty coverlet. My blue Harp in the little alcove.

Getting better'n better'n Better!

O heavenly, delicious Home.

March 5, 1910. A Letter: and a Shock. News from Stratford — via Ireland — that 'The Piper' is *One of TWO* — the Two Final Plays.

March 6. This time it did cause suspense 'cause I was mending, and 'cause I had given up hope.

And 'cause it did seem to me it would do such wonderful, *wonderful*, seraphic, skylark Cinderella, apotheosis things if it could Happen! . . . But I tried — indeed, I tried to keep my heart low, even as a weanèd child. . . . And all these nights I had good sleep.

. . . Better sleep than my own Dearest! (who came mighty near getting excited).

March 8. Yes, my heart is low, even as a weanèd child.

March 9. . . . Even as a weanèd child.

March 10. 'The Piper' wins!

Laus Deo. This very birthday of Fra Leo.

March 11, 1910. Cables, telegrams, motors, callers, letters, flowers all day long. 'Tis much like waking up to find one's self famous.

A dizzying dream. Benign and patriotic cab-driver calls after Lionel in the street, 'Professor Marks, your wife's ALL RIGHT.'

March 15. And still it keeps on — this delicious, unhoped-for thing that people (and papers) take it as an honor for the country, and a Banner for the cause of womankind. Oh — oh — and I wanted to be something or other for these in some manner, some day!

[1] From hospital.

To Mrs. S. E. Marks

CAMBRIDGE, 18 *March*, 1910

WELL, DEAR MADRE!

. . . I tell you *such* excitements are good for the health. He needed it; and it is building him up splendidly. He's a *fine* color, and actually fuller in the face than three weeks ago. And you *will* see him in June! I feel *so* disappointed, apologetic that you'll have to see *me* first without him. BUT there's Alison, Oh, Oh! And wee Brother Lion. ('Fra Leo' is his pet name!)

You shall have more details about the How and When and Where of it, of course, before we descend like a plague of locusts! — (But I know you'd rather have us than not!) — Only Lionel shall write, as these things are cleared up and settled. *I* am forbidden to think, plan or worry. . . .

Mother rejoices that you are to see us at last. (I'm so sorry she can't come to the Festival.) And how I *do* want you to behold that radiant mischief, Alison! And to hear her say, 'Ba-a-a-a — by!' delicately putting her finger in his eye. He is developing much strength of muscle and a lovely clear pink complexion. His head and ears are *exquisite*, indeed, *all* his features; and the three doctors *all* said they had never seen such beautiful little hands on any Baby. He has much hair; and you will laugh to see that it grows *precisely* like Lionel's.

Blessings on him; on you, and me, and all of us. And blissful times soon and all summer! I *hope* you are happy about it. I am!

Love to all
'Specially you
From us two

To Katharine Lee Bates

18 *March*, 1910

OH, DEARLY BELOVED K. L. B!

How can I thank you for your lovely words over all these blessings I so richly Don't Deserve!

But far be it from me to haggle like a Puritan, with the Lord Himself, when He seems to bid me to a most celestial Skylark! Oh, oh, *can't* you be there? Sooner or later?

Imagine this four-weeks progress of mine, from the nethermost hell of bodily pain and mental blankness. (I was *overjoyed* with the Babe, and filled with gratitude. But the *will-to-live* had been massacred out of me, and I couldn't see why I *had* to, at such a price, the Babe being here and living.)

And now! — Héjà! I hope I don't lose any of the Understandings I got out of that sojourn — from the 'waters underneath the earth' . . . I pine to *see* you, and tell and ask and relate and say and sing the thousand things. You must let me know what souvenirs of the Occasion would best please you and the Department.

You will know how my joy is sometimes like a spear in me, I want so much to *share* it.

Still very weak. But the Babes are shining.

Yours devotedly

March, 1910. And letters and letters and flowers and flowers. Socks for Fra Leo mixed up with telegrams congratulatory, lilies for Easter, shamrocks for Patrick, reporters for me!

To-day in comes the English mail!

London papers call me 'American Lady.'

Local papers call me 'Cambridge woman,' 'New England Poetess.'

New York papers call me 'An Ex-New Yorker.'

Press generously announces

'The Stratford Prize

OURS.'

March, 1910. Among the adventitious reasons for interest in 'The Piper' we now number

1) International aspect
2) Woman question and Suffrage
3) Harvard, Radcliffe and Wellesley local pride
4) Bearings on the law to exclude child actors!

Friend Hagedorn even pointed out apt anti-vivisection passage that had escaped me! But we shall find out in time all the things I meant.

March, 1910. Great Cinderella doings, this first of Spring! And all manner of kind helps to a recumbent Cinderella.... I find it easier to shop flat on my back than any other way. For the other folks do it! My clothes do be flying together: and nothing ever was easier than getting ready to go to Europe in four weeks, with a nurse and two Babies.

March, 1910. Marian Terry cast for Veronika. Music being written by Christopher Wilson: scenery by Harker! Advance Press Notices favorable.... And a letter from an unknown (and unbalanced) female in England says that she would like very much to have a tiny little portion of the £300 prize 'for a rainy day.'

March, 1910.... So much sad news that we are utterly at a loss, and I feel the *unrealest* thing that ever happened, sitting in the midst of my Fairy-Tale hour and looking through a crystal globe, on a world of bitter sorrow.

March, 1910. This evening a reading of The II[1] in Craigie House for the Anti-Tuberculosis League. And it's glad I am to have The II out and doing for me, and earning as I can't, so far, to give away. The very first reading of it, to my great glee, was planned before the Prize news ever came out — and was for the benefit of *Crippled and Destitute Children.*

It's like a good fairy story to me.

May 6, 1910. A most interesting lunch party:[2] of

[1] *The Piper.*

[2] At Stratford, England.

trustees for the Birthplace, prior to their annual meeting. Lord Curzon, Lord Redesdale, Lord Herford, Lord Warwick, (likewise Lady!) Sidney Lee, Miss Fyffe and the Flowers. I sat between Curzon and Sidney Lee and had some interesting and enjoyable talk.

May 7. The King died at 11.45 last night.

May 8. The Festival is abandoned, of course, and the Play won't be produced till the Summer Festival. (If ever, if Ever, if Ever!)

Heigh-ho! So the clock, indeed, struck twelve; and Cinderella scattered!

To Mrs. Charles Peabody

LONDON, 31 *May*, 1910

DEAREST MOTHER AND SISTER:

May I answer your good birthday greetings together and send you my love and thanks for your wishes? I was very glad to have them, indeed, since there seems to be no reasoned basis whatever for thinking I'm not (materially) done for; only faith and a small rush-light. 'Pon honor, you never saw anything like the worldly desolation of it. The amazing people were only for those few days — in fact *one* day — at Stratford. Then the clock struck twelve and we all scattered; and my coach turned to a pumpkin; and I found myself inking my gloves like the last act of Beau Brummell! (This is literally true: because I didn't want to buy another long pair of black ones; but bought they must be! The acute distress of trade has, however, caused the King to shorten the term of national mourning which is to end absolutely on June 30th. But till that time, I go in black; for one cannot courteously do otherwise. Colors in London are almost unseen.) Such homesickness as I've lived through here in London I never felt before. I feel as if I'd give Cæsar Borgia half a crown to lick my hands and call me Darling. Isn't it degrading? But it's facts. . . .

July, 1910. Fra Leo is to be 'shortened' to-morrow; and the Vision he is — always smiling and drawing his breath the wrong way in his eagerness to talk — leaping inside his long linen baby-dress, leaping like a fountain from morning to night; untiring as long as he wakes; sleeping like a rose, with his chubby hands astir and his darling feet curled up tightly under him. He is always happy — smiling like a Holy Child whenever one speaks to him.

August, 1910. And this day, all gloriously (in spite of a gray sky with only wandering weather gleams) our precious Baby, Fra Leo, was christened in Stratford Church; and his blessed baby head sprinkled with water from the very font of Shakespeare and *his* children, and most worshipful new friends standing by — and himself all smiles and little murmurs: — and the lucky good Vicar it was to kiss him first . . . and the Vicar has had his baptismal card framed in a bit of old oak from the *belfry ladder of Shakespeare's day.*

On our way to the christening it was that I had a cablegram — news that Ames has bought 'The Piper.'

To Mr. Ernest Peabody

MURREN (SWITZERLAND), 23 *August*, 1910

The top of the morning to you, Dobby dear, from here where I sit on the top of the World! And the keen pleasure it was to be seeing your beguiling penmanship once more, after a heartless stretch o' time, I must say and declare.

Let me tell you at once, to be rid of all 'business,' that, of course, I shall inscribe with pleasure any book that's sent to me in this world or the next. So do not apologize, but let her send it along. My home address — you may have forgotten — is 88 Lakeview Avenue, Cambridge — and a not unattractive abode (withal small and modest) where a guest might hang up his hat, if he were now and then so friendly and Remembering, or cared to make the

heart-subduing acquaintance of his second cousins; — Alison and 'Fra Leo.'

As to the Stratford-on-Avon performances, I *do* hope you'll see the full accounts in our U.S.A. 'Outlook' (about now) and in the 'Boston Evening Transcript' (I have not seen them yet; but they will be there). The decent cables on the 27th of July were only hasty messages, and even their 'tremendous reception' gave one no idea of the true Paderewski-recital uproar that gladdened the worn spirits of L. S. M. and me after our battering summer (and the fearful collision with the untoward death of Edward VII and postponement of the Great Day — a catastrophe impossible to make good). The details of that night and of the 'Presentation' and all, should appear in these full articles; and as the fantastic *charm* of the whole story is the true inwardness of it, and not any worldly thing that may (and MAY NOT) accrue therefrom, I do indeed wish that you might all have been there, to see and live a real fairy-tale.

I had lived through harrowing weeks and months, helping to pluck the Play — on a fighting chance — out of the teeth of utter *destruction;* and to my own mind, though not to the audience's, the way they acted (and FORGOT) Act III had made me feel that evening like something being slowly *roasted* at the stake. But they had done the first act *splendidly* (made the house rise and roar when the children ran out); — and they pulled up again through the speed and spirit of the good Bensonian company on the fourth act; and it *was* an 'Ovation' if ever such a thing has been seen.

I had to receive a long ceremonial speech, you know, along with the little silver casket, and mounds of flowers; so after the end of the play, and the actors' many curtain calls, and prolonged uproar for the author, I stole out — and I was 'arranged' (the curtain being down) in the centre of the stage, with the Governors, the Mayor and Vicar of Stratford, and the whole company, children and all — backing me — in Hamelin market-place.

Then the curtain rose upon us; and the speech began. I had dreaded it as the last torture to be wreaked upon a jaded mind and body (before that evening). And it was trying enough. But the waves of good-will and human delight that swept to sustain me, over those footlights, were something beautiful and undreamed of. They made me feel like a very happy Child. And when, having the little casket placed in my hands, I had to make some reply, I must say I felt it a relief, a quietness and a deep *delight* to come down and say my say. And you may be sure that all my dearest friends were in my mind — like an arras full of faces — and the old days when the Sonnets of Wm. S. were a mascot (as Lesley knows). And there was I — 'dressed like a bride' and looking straight through the wall of that theatre, with my inner eye, upon the Warwickshire evening outside, and *close* by — at the turn of the river — the spire of the dearest church in the world.

I gush on in this manner, because it is the happy and wonderful memory; and I send it with my love to Lesley too.

'Fra Leo' was christened in that church on the 2nd of August — and — as a very great honor — in the *Old* font, where Shakespeare himself and his own children were christened, and which only *one* other baby has been permitted to use for 150 years! Héjà! — And did he not smile like a (much better-looking) Della Robbia! . . .

October 17, 1910. On this strange day, two died: — two Lights went out — one old and one young — my two cherished Lights, Will Vaughn Moody (in Colorado) and dearest Julia Ward Howe. . . . And the keen sense of their ideals, achieved, and still unrealized, makes me know quite surely now, how I must work, as hard and as fast and as joyously as may be.

December, 1910. I never suspected, before I knew him and studied him, how much a part of constant beauty and nobility unselfishness is; nor how much the habit of constant self-indulgence in things harmless but trivial tends to

mark and disfigure and lose beauty with the lines of structure just as fatally as fatness does the physical.

January 1, 1911. New Moon, New Year, New Work: Bless Us all in this little House and let us bless some other people outside of it. Amen and Amen. And Hurrah, Boys! and also Yoho, and Tirra Lira!

January, 1911. Again, again, I have to tear me from those Rose faces and pack up and go to New York.[1] . . . But it's lucky for me I have a Jack-the-Giant-Killer love of small adventure, and I can fairly rest myself on the turbulence of circumstance (when it's not for me to choose) like a feather on the wind.

'The Piper' has been put into a raised-letter book for the Blind! I'm so delighted.

Héjà! These *Piper* adventures!

January, 1911. Arrive in a dazzling burst of morning-colored weather, New York at its best: — the towers and sky-scrapers swimming in light that might be Egypt. . . . Go to rehearsal. . . . Delicious result of introducing two stage property babies among the children!!! Never shall I forget that swarm of honey bees — deaf to Mr. Platt and the prompter.

January 30, 1911. Première of 'The Piper' . . . according to testimony of house the biggest success the New Theatre has ever had. Curtain calls after each act and author at the end. And speech. And 'America' played by the orchestra.

February, 1911. Blessing and honor on this day that brought us the blessed Fra Leo, like a pearl from the nether darkness of the worlds. A year ago to-day! And I hereby take my Pen in Hand now, to begin a new play for his delight — if that may be, in anything so unworthy.

Also, this evening, a blessèd windfall of an Idea for to make Volume Next more of a *whole*. I caper and weep for joy.

[1] For the New York production of *The Piper*.

To Amy Marks

88 LAKEVIEW AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
12 *February*, 1911

DEAREST AMY:

I was aghast to discover yesterday that Lionel (who was going to write for us the day before) had had his letter-time completely wiped out by a crowd of students anxious over their exams — and the steamer has gone without a word! — Immediately on top of your nice long letter, too, pleading for news and telling so many details about the London play.

Do forgive it, to my exhaustion, first, and then to Lionel's heaped-up concerns, and college business waiting knee-deep. The poor dear was going to write from his office; but his office caught him like a mouse before he could. In a word, if you haven't seen the clippings he sent the Madre at once, with a hurried word (the day following the *première*) the play was a magnificent success with the press and the public.

We were jaded beyond thinking and, of course, saw the whole thing pallid and value-less in a thousand ways, chiefly by reason of that outrageous coup of the management in casting Edith Wynne Mattheson (who once played 'Everyman') for the *Piper*.

She played it better than any other woman could, the papers all agreed; but she looked the *lad* at best, and was altogether too light, physically, to be the basic character for that play (beside throwing all the author's biggest intention to the winds perforce). But the papers, one and all, and with most dignified, just criticisms, held up to blame this problem in *miscasting*, and gave their voices, beyond my wildest hopes or dreams, to praise of the *play*, which they all agreed to be the *first complete justification* of the New Theatre — the first *popular* poetic drama in America — the biggest success of the theatre since its founding, and everything else you'd like to hear!!!!!

Every paper speaks of the '*unanimous* press' on this point and it is really more glory (as far as unqualified *praise* goes) than I ever dreamed of at all in this world. More *Chance*, too!

I suppose it's impossible for most people to understand, in the face of all this approbation, how *wan* we both felt just over the pale semblance of the play to the thing we know to be *in* it, for *vividness* and strength. But the wild pleasure of the actors, that evening, over their 'unprecedented first night,' the assurances of everybody that there never *had* been such enthusiasm at the *New Theatre* before; and that continuous stream of like-minded reviews pouring in from week to week, made us lift our drooping heads and rejoice in the same. (The *noise* was very tame beside the splendid uproar in our little Stratford theatre:—partly eaten up by *vast space*, though the huge house was filled to the brim.) I invited Mother and Marion on to New York for several days: and they did the honors of one large box; while L. and I sat in another (though I frequently dived through the curtains into the retiring-room and hid my ears, from sheer emotional exhaustion); and we received a changing stream of reporters and friends who came to speak to us. Author was called after Act II, but disappeared and declined to break the sequence of the play *then*. At the *end*, and after curtain calls for the actors, she was 'led on' by the Piper, who then disappeared and left her to make a brief speech.

Author wore a (new and awfully pretty) gown, consisting of a cream-colored silk-embroidered net tunic (it looked like brocade at a distance) over cream *crêpe-de-chine*, very thin and trailing; low-necked; short-sleeved; violets in her hair; wedding-slippers!

She was hailed with prolonged applauses, some '*Bravo's*'; — and as she withdrew, the orchestra played 'America' (known on *your* side of the water as 'God Save the King.' Most convenient, how that leopard can change his spots!)

Flowers came to her, in her box; but the theatre does not allow them to be handed over the footlights.

Two points in the play were better than the English; E. W. M. gave most of her lines *beautifully*, as to the rhythm and diction; and wrought the audience up to the right pitch at the close of *Act III. That held absolutely* (and, of course, without any horrible foolery with *lights* on faces. I *am* angry at that interference. It's so flagrantly against the whole spirit of the play.) She plays that splendidly each time; and never misses the thrill out of the audience. (2) Veronika, though too large by contrast with Miss M., played very beautifully, and was much more *like it* than Marian Terry. Her costuming was lovely, too — in Act III — trailing dim draperies, from mauve to dovelike bluish — and head-veil — and long Gothic braids over her shoulders. (3) The dance-spell scene was splendidly done, with fine humor, and tempestuous speed; and nobody *could* be puzzled!

Au reste — the English children were much better; the English crowd was better, most of the time; English Michael was infinitely better; and the English scenery was no whit behind — save for *elaboration* of loveliness in Act III. I prefer the English color (heather and white birches), but our woods and trees were *wonderfully* real, and I'll send you some illustrated papers as soon as the better ones come out.

We stayed but for three days after the opening night; to send in more criticisms for later performances. Then we tore home to see our blessed babes (gloriously flourishing all this time). *Fra Leo*, one year old yesterday! — blooms as the rose; weighs twenty-three pounds; has six teeth (going on eight); eats toast and milk with angelic satisfaction in rubbing his pearls together; and is the adored of all beholders.

Alison is in fine spirits now, and sings from morning till night. She *naps* no longer, at eleven A.M. — but she is put to bed, and lies there, chanting, intoning, and calling to mind visions of all the 'chickens falling down' and other apocalyptic sights she has ever seen.

I am so dreadfully tired that I long to be *safely* quiet

for a whole week; and think of pretending to be ill, for the privilege of resting in bed, and denying myself to all calls or callers; and soothing my mind with a *new* play (to chuck *the Piper out* of it, now if ever!!!).

I've *begun* the new play (on Fra Leo's birthday) and hope to get a first draft of it done in ten days. 'The Singing Man' will be out in 'The American Magazine' (May number, out by April 20th). I'll send it to you. And another poem, my latest, 'Alison's Mother to the Brook' will be out in 'Scribner's' sometime.

I haven't a poem left in the cupboard (that I wish to publish!) — so you see — 'I must be off and pipe!' But it *is* wonderfully good fun to have all this golden opportunity to do my work as I want to do it, to say what I want to say, and to find that people desire to hear it, and *do* hear it, and *are* ready for anything the Lord sees fit to bestow upon my wool-gathering wits. I am thankful with all my heart for these blessings. And I think the babies will be, too.

Your loving sister

February, 1911. I do three quarters of Act I of the New Play (rough draught), and see two cooks and engage one. With a hot heart, all eagerness, I do pursue the New Play; and write madly at it and all over it; to put an end to my Abominable Sloth.

February, 1911. I keep at it and get through Act I and part of Act II. 'Very neat and pretty.'

3.30 P.M. Three cheers! — Three acts done (in a very rough scrubby draught, but still worded after a fashion) in three days; and behold, it is 'Brother Wolf of Gubbio' his drama — a play for children (and their grown folks they take with them); and it is in prose and poetry; for the common folks talk in prose, but Saint Francis and the wood creatures and the Epic Wolf, of course, speak in rhymed verse; the wolf's is four-legged, of course. But I like it very much.

Praise God! Here goes for another!

To Margarethe Müller

88 LAKEVIEW AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,
18 *February*, 1911

DEAR MARGARETHE!

I rejoice — but I may not 'rest' on my laurels! No, indeed, I only change Cooks! For rest, I plunge head first into the Next Play — whereof I have just turned off a first draught (very scrubby) in some four days! So don't be thinking that I let the time lapse by, when I see any!

I have to dash on to New York again next week for five days. Then back here; and I hope to do the 'Play after Next' — and what remains for Volume Next! And oh, what glorious, adorable, delicious FRESH WORK! . . .

The babes are all glorious and shouting-healthy. When we get back, week after next, if we can once gather at the same time, you, and them, and him and me, and a cook!

Oh, *do* come! Life is full to bursting: — bursting into millions of clouds of little star-worlds again.

To Anna Branch

88 LAKEVIEW AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
19 *February*, 1911

ANNA DEAR:

. . . One thing cannot even wait for telephone. I must shout it at once, for my sore fear of causing you some hurt or suspense or something. (A shout for *your* ears *alone, alone;* not even a whisper to any other creature.) You speak of the heavenly Hero of your *new play*. *I've* just finished a new play, too — *For Children* this time, though (secret); and our Saint appears in *that* (secret); — only as the young and joyous Brother, only. And the *Hero* of mine (secret) is — the Wolf of Gubbio.

Now, dearest Anna? Will it, can it, in *any way* affect you or yours? I hope and pray not. And I'm sure not. Since the whole world is bound — or half of it — to be thinking,

at one time or another, of its treasures. And it wouldn't *have* any treasures, it sometimes seems, if the Little Poor Man hadn't walked in Umbria. It makes me feel kin with your spirit (I don't dare say 'very closely,' for I feel it such a rare spirit) — but kin, kin, surely, that we are drawn so to the same hearth-fires of the astral world. Why 'astral' again? Just, the World. You shall tell me, though, to make me feel tranquil.

Yours with love and thanks and the haste of the North Wind.

February, 1911. Juniper is a singer among birds. You can't hear him without tears. He has the all of summer in his wee throat. . . . He is no canary at all; but an individual and a God-blessèd Singer in the world.

February, 1911. Snow again and bitter cold. But Juniper helps me much with improvements on 'The Wolf of Gubbio'; and chirks and chirrings of his own to beguile my spirits.

Also 'The Piper' ninth edition is out, going on tenth, and the 'Singing Leaves' is in its sixth. I mean now to toss up plays like a juggler playing with three balls at a time.

March, 1911. I see the glorious New Moon with Venus close beside her, smiling from a sea-blue afterglow; and the earth-light clear on the Moon. It rests me more than anything I've seen or done these many, many weeks.

March, 1911. The precious one's temperature is better, but her nerves are uproarious. Now and then the poor baby bursts into a lyrical wail, and positively *sings* a sobbing lament all her own.

Oh, *Bee*, *Bee*, *Bee!* La, la,
Né, né, — Né — né — né —

beating her little hands together and sobbing wildly. It's so funny and so fascinating, and so full of lost faëry despair.

To Katie Marks

16 April, 1911

MY DEAR, DEAR KATIE:

. . . But you will want to know, maybe, *why* I have been off again; and where. I went to Washington, D.C. (the capital of the U.S.A.) on the 5th of April, to give a reading of 'The Piper' there, and visited (for three days) my friend and school-mate (Dr.) Emma Lootz Erving. I returned to New York, Sunday the 9th and in the afternoon I joined a party of seven — as a Delegate (with them) — chosen and besought to go West, and address the legislatures of Wisconsin and Illinois — upon a proposed Child Labor Bill — or rather an amendment, permitting and *protecting* the appearance of child-actors on the stage, under very properly exacting conditions, guarding their welfare in all respects.

It is an important measure and has been bitterly opposed, and with tremendous force and success. The National Alliance for the Protection of Stage Children, to which I belong, begged me to go on (all *expenses* paid) and speak in behalf of the Bill, in company with Augustus Thomas (foremost American playwright — middle-aged), Percy MacKaye (poet-playwright), Hamlin Garland (author), Mr. Royle (playwright and actor), Mrs. B. K. Baker (chaperon — middle-aged teacher of expression, and educator), Miss La Follette — a young and very delightful girl, recently on the stage, and daughter of a distinguished Senator who may some day be President of the United States. We had a *special* car to Wisconsin (a long journey, some thirty-six hours) and special cars all the way, everywhere; but it was the most strenuous life I have (*almost*) ever lived — for five days; nothing but violent railroad travel, conferring about the Bill — not sleeping nights, with weariness and racking headaches, and making two speeches that were bound to have importance at the time. The hearings were both tremendously successful for us; and I think the measure is pretty certain to

go through. But it was my first Appearance in Politics!! And I hope its success won't drag me out of my house again. . . .

April, 1911. Lionel's darling Mother died to-day. . . . It is a wonderful thing to see, through tears, what a brightness that darling woman takes away with her, entirely, out of the earth.

The little New House, the little garden she was never to see, even had she lived — suddenly they have all lost their special brightness. I didn't know before that it was their special brightness, but I feel it now, with a pang and amazement and terror, almost — *She* will not be there to listen and rejoice and imagine — And her wonderful mother-bright love and joy in everything that was ours . . . that made our happiness threefold happier. . . . Bless her for being so beautiful, all, all beautiful to have had and to remember. And I am so glad to know and have it that we two loved each other from the first moment.

April, 1911. Home again — and to-day we signed the deeds, and

Bought the House
and
The Garden: and the Little Road.

And it is *The Piper's House*, after all.

May, 1911. We took formal possession of the House and blessed it with an afternoon May party of two May queens and a King (our babies and darling Mary Hagedorn); the queens in veils and green garlands and pink rompers and the King waving his blue socks to the breeze, as usual, under his wreath of green. The other adoring parents, our first guests, brought us also a salutation and blessing on the House; a May-song from Hermann the poet and Dorothea his wife.

May, 1911. Start getting 'The Singing Man' volume in shape, as to order, and wind up Poem. I have the link-songs to do, and the Wind-up (which hit me suddenly the

evening of May Day at the Socialist meeting). May the Lord prosper it and all of them. . . .

May, 1911. The last of our glorious old friends, the dear Colonel.[1] Lionel and I went to the service, and glorious it was to see, and touching and splendid — that magnificent frame of him, carried on the shoulders of black soldiers and drooping colors carried before and after. And the bugles at the end. Blessings on him, splendid and loving old citizen and soldier and friend. He was always so beautiful to us, too, in our happiness.

To Katie Marks

26 May, 1911

DEAREST KATIE:

. . . We rush over to weed in the garden, or plant, every hour that our rather too agitating household, of late, will let us have a breathing spell; and it gives Lionel so much pleasure. I always have the feeling that your darling Mother *comes* somewhere near there in answer to our intense desire to think she might share it with us. She is always smiling at me, along the wee, narrow walks, and over the planted beds; and her voice is always so fresh in my memory that I know it can never grow dim.

So I have had some real *joy* in this little garden, even so soon; and perhaps it is the best tribute to her abounding life and radiance, that we *cannot* realize that she is gone. Who is to say how *far*, in any case? One's mere inextinguishable *feeling* about her seems a thousand times more potent than all men's philosophizing about a 'future life.' She is so real a part of *present* Life — present, unbroken, and everlasting. And I cannot help thinking that she looked at my Irises this morning, shining all over with the night's rain, because I couldn't look at them without calling her to look too; and yet, the next moment she was close to *you*, because you are her own, and always wanting her; and there is no Distance for the Soul, when its eyes are opened. . . .

[1] Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

To Dorothy Hagedorn

SCITUATE, MASSACHUSETTS
6 *June*, 1911

Blessings on you — Neighbors Dear! And a thousand happiest returns of this Day. And many, many happy returns to the country you leave on the 8th, for a happy sojourn over-seas. . . .

I was nowhere near forgetting either your sailing-date, or *this* best of all Sailings; — is it three years now?

Ours will be *five* years, on the 21st, the Solstice. And we plan and hope to get into our Home then by way of celebration; not a tranquil lily-of-the-field festivity; but still pleasing enough. A bridegroom in overalls, and a bride in a pinafore, mops and hammers in hand, and the maidens that be her companions bearing china and pictures and unpacked fragilities withal; and all their garments smelling of myrrh, aloes, and moth-marbles, out of the cedar chests and store-rooms whereby they have made me glad! . . .

June, 1911. Daughter is a wonderful Pearl to see, since her illness has taken away her Rose Red Snow White. . . . She shines out of her long knit nightgown with a wonderful starlike impertinence, tyrannizing day and night with a fury quite transcendent in a person less than one yard long. . . .

When she saw the waves with whitecaps on them, she observed that the 'water was spitting out!' — a triumph of naturalism drawn from the Book of the Tooth Brush. . . .

She is so exquisite, she keeps me awake all night whether I feel that I should watch or not.

July, 1911. L. came back to dine. And, ah, his raw cook — tried — how shall I say it — to brown raw carrots for him without boiling 'em first.

B-b-b-but they were very *very* young.

July, 1911. Oh, New Moon, New Moon, bring us all

freshness to our souls and bodies, and let my Dear sail joyously away and home again, and let my babies bloom; and in Heaven's name let me finish that Book as I desire — or almost as I desire!

July, 1911. Our first day in our

OWN HOUSE

We breakfasted at our oldest large gate-leg table, dined thereat, and supped upon the porch. . . . And I cooked mushrooms for L.'s breakfast and more for supper, and it felt much like Stratford and a little like Capri and Assisi. And the evening and the morning were the First Day.

Carpenters, painters and a' hard at it. . . . But Beauty descends upon our house as a glow and a garment. . . . And I please myself with that psalm for the 16th, always a delight to me in my poor young, houseless days, 'Yea the sparrow hath found her an house and the swallow a nest.'

August, 1911. I started being Vegetarian last Sunday morn. And I hope I may resume being a Poet to-morrow morn.

To-day, being quite ready to begin on the Book, I *nearly* oozed tears of despair — with Mrs. L., the gas-man, the carpenter, the undesired grocery-boy, the uninvited fruit-man, and lastly dear Uncle come to reform the strawberry bed and stay to lunch. . . . But in spite of 'em all, I think I settled something of important details in the contents: no more. The Lord knows how my body and soul are screaming for some reprieve from this incessant and unholpen Bedlam. And in His own time some good will come of it all.

August, 1911. I beat Brother Ass along; but he lies down flat and just looks at me. . . .

In a desperate struggle to hear the rhythms that are trying to go on in my jaded head, I bring all the MSS. for the book downstairs and set it upon the piano and *play it*, to try and pull myself together!

August, 1911. Ah me, I waste this day, partly with workmen's interruption, partly my own sloth, partly ill feel-

ings and bodily feebleness. I don't quite know, with so much real fatigue, how far I over or under cudgel Brother Ass.

. . . I try to finish the 'Cantico del Bimbo' and 'May Day' and 'Gladness,' and the interludes. . . . But the glaze is almost settling over the eyes of Brother Ass!

Never mind. New moon to-night: and I have fought some kind of a fight — though much less pleased with myself than was the apostle, naturally!

. . . Oh, my central Joy — my conscience toward my Canzone, and my will to be true at any cost — you that dance like a fountain, day and night, you that exult over all my tears — could you only Dance on the House-top and let men know it's You, indeed!

To Lionel S. Marks

THE HOUSE, 11 *August*, 1911

DEAREST ANYWHERE:

. . . The most that can be said of Tony Ydobaep, this season, is that she certainly doesn't *bother* anybody. She is as little parasitic as it is given to most human beings to be. And she blindly cudgels Brother Ass along the road as far as effort, fasting, prayer, contrition, cogitation, coffee, fanning, and flagellation will drive him. It is not far.

I have *pebbles* (not peas) in my shoes; and I will try what a hair shirt may do to-morrow.

Breakfast at 7 A.M. — Rush about and set things to rights, inspect garden, telephone to Ice Company: 9–12 (WITH INTERRUPTIONS) try devices new and old, to make my petrified mind work. Lunch; — read Encyclo. Britt. (à la monastic refectory) for recreation. *Gipsy* — *Giraffe* — *Giotto*. Play 'The Singing Man' entire on the piano — to see how *that* will sound; and make one or two emendations.

Read Dictionary: — Roget's Thesaurus: — Greek dictionary; — Anglo-Saxon primer, to see if anything will make English feel less like a dead language.

Uncle arrives — to see how I'm getting on, and confer

with me about reforming this impossible French garden. Return to my efforts; and keep 'em up all day.

Oh! speaking of *gardens*. Really this *does* look sweet, now. The melons and cucumbers have *covered* those patches with vines; there are going to be lots of melons. There are tiger-lilies and phlox and golden-glow in a tall jungle. . . .

To Margarethe Müller

11 ELMWOOD AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE
22 *August*, 1911

DEAREST M. M.

. . . We hastily rented a 6×14-inch cottage at Scituate and put our Babies and the nurses in it — that they, at least, might be cool and safe. (And thank Heaven, they ARE!) We packed up — L. and I — without assistance in those days (101–104 Fahr.) and MOVED: and survived; but not much more. Lionel immediately took upon himself an expert *Boiler-test*, lasting through the next ten days, and finished what little strength he had left. His exhaustion plainly demanded radical change and rest, impossible in this Awful country (for summers) with households along. So he actually sailed for *Norway* (via England) the 29th of July (me positively *fanning* his sails from the docks, to get him off); and *I* remain; I hold the fort (here's the adventure, and mind it never gets to the ears of my wee little anxious parent!) I am *all sole alone* — have been, and shall be (till the second week in September) sans Man, sans Maid, sans Cat, sans Everything. (But the Lord.) And I felt it high time, myself, to get back into that childish state of simplicity, for *my* change; since Rest is absolutely not to be mine this summer. They have finished off the house and are doing the tool-house now. And I've overdone so constantly and consistently this whole year, that my abused interior much enfeebles me, and prevents me from skimming the cream off the fun of household activities; also from settling the Upstairs as rapidly as I could wish.

In spite of all, I am wondrous happy; for they are all doing exactly the best thing for them, and nobody knows how used-up I am, or witnesses my desperate struggles with 'Brother Ass' to get my poor, postponed Book finished, if that may be. And the being utterly alone — and often (Saturday noon to Monday) without a soul to speak to — for forty-eight hours — withal having two houses, and the far-off Babes, and the garden, and the Book, and the Ames-Hampden suit upon me, to see through, it all gives me a sense of reality that is delightfully varied by the necessity of running out, and gathering a few carrots and cucumbers to cook, now and then, for my meals — when I choose to Cook 'em!

Now where on earth are you? And what are you doing? And is the Book getting on? And are YOU, by any chance, at all, in Wellesley? All by *Yourself? And cudgelling 'Brother Ass' because — you — don't — really — feel — like — working — and running — out — to — pull a few — carrots — and — cucumbers — for your meals — when you feel — like — Cooking — 'em?*

Et tu, Margarethe ? ? ? ? ? . . . . . Hey?

If that be so (forbid it Heaven, and let *her*, at least, have a grand and glorious Holiday, and a frivolous one!) my telephone number (not in the book, and *never* to be there) is: Cambridge 3674–M, and let's hear you *laugh* across the 'phone. (I find, when I do go out on an errand — after all this solitary confinement — and meet anybody I know — some strange excitement makes me *neigh* like a colt, and crow like a rooster. I cannot temper the trumpeting of my unused lungs! But isn't it interesting, though? The psychology of utter Solitude.)

Bless you. Send me a word; or Say it. For a little human converse undoubtedly does help one along! My Boy gets back September 18th. My Babies I shall keep away till the 10th (with a weekly flight — or rather crawl — to be physiological) to see them. Blessings on you!

Your own

To Lionel S. Marks

11 ELMWOOD AVENUE
17 *August*, 1911

DEAREST OF ALL THINGS:

Your first letter brought me a splendid morning. Héjà, it was good to have! . . .

It made me feel sure that you really *were* going to feel rested soon; and that has given me a day of deep delight.

Indeed, my Blessing, although no one pretends that I disdain a 'change of air,' or a summer time — in summer-time — I feel indescribably jocund to know that *now* there is some sense in my mounded-up responsibilities; for you are good enough to let my staying here make some difference, and a good difference. And there isn't a single worldly care that you need to have the slightest recollection for. They are *all taken care of;* and *all's serene.* And I am looking after everything; and learning much besides; and not bothering *anybody*, am I? Then who so chanticleerish gay as Cinderella? Oh, Oh, *one* blot on my 'scutcheon. (For 'scutcheons, use Old Dutch Cleanser. If *very* bad, boil 'em one night with Borax; then rub with a soft flannel.) As I was saying, while my attention was taken up with gas-men, plumbers, carpenters, cleansers, Ames, Hampden, and . . . er — Mrs. Poole's furniture, I *did* neglect to look *inside* the cabbages for cabbage-worm; and there he is; that is, in one set of them to my bitter grief — the row in front of the currant bushes, where nothing seems to do as well. It is too heartrending; and all those lace-like holes happened in two days. On top of the only rain we've had, too. And me watering the garden myself each evening, like a faithful Deluge; and thinking I had done (almost) all things (pretty) well (considering!) The tomatoes appear to be in splendid condition; and the endive and all the *other* cabbages and Kales.

The precious Babies are as glorious as only one or other of their parents can know or imagine. Praise Heaven for that!

AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-SEVEN
WITH HER DAUGHTER, ALISON, AND HER SON, LIONEL

The sleeping-porch is *just done* (not stained yet) and it surely ought to be a delight; I am tremendously eager to get out there to sleep, at once.

18 *August*, 4 P.M.

To-day I took a day Off, Sweetheart; I had Mrs. Logan here to wash and prowl up and down and answer the doors (she has achieved the difference between the front door and the others, now). So I returned to my Bed at 10 A.M. and revelled in prostrate coolness and a needed rest. It is comical to see the rate at which my spirits go up (after extreme fatigue) when I lie quiet a day, where quiet may be had; and now I feel so blithesome *as* never *was*.

I found the shortest cut, after all, to the remaining Inter-Rhythms for the Book, was just to read and read my old Day Books for 1907 and 1908! To *stuff* on them, indeed. And I never thought of yielding to that pleasant pastime before, because it was so Pleasant! But Héjà! I wish I were with you now for an hour, *perched on the top of Kerrara*, swinging my heels over all the colors of this glorious and fragrant world; and I wish *you* were there, this minute, with some good chap who has eyes and lungs.

Sweetheart, this little house is a *duck* of a little house. Its comforts and delights grow on one every day; and they will have grown very considerably delightfuller by your return. It *is* a pleasure to see the unaffected astonishment of every mechanic or expressman who walks in. It's something rather touching, too, and hopeful, to perceive their deep pleasure at the novelty of its real beauty; for there is nothing 'gaudy' about it. To-day, an expressman, who brought upstairs a (highly satisfactory) object I had purchased in town, exclaimed to Mrs. Logan, 'I say, ain't this a *bee-ootiful House?*. . . I guess I never *seen* such a bee-ootiful House before.' (Mrs. L.'s version.) How I hope it will seem good to you, when you *do* come back. No news: = Good News; throw away the Yellow Glasses; and Shut your eyes when they are tired. Don't read; whistle.

For family portraits see September 'Scribner's'!

. . . The only deep, abiding *lack* in my own present adventure (it *has* gnawed its way into my consciousness) is — something or somebody to kiss Good-night, and Good-morning; or any other hour that's good. But let me look out the window and see what offers.

Your TONY

P.S. Nothing there at the moment.

To Lionel S. Marks

Sunday, 20 August, 1911

SWEETHEART:

. . . You will realize, by the stupidity of my letters, the truly monkish isolation (after 5 P.M. — and from Saturday noon till Monday morning) of my days. But it is a manner of life well worth trying; as I needn't tell you; and as I knew it would be. I miss a little cream off the top, from bodily heaviness and exhaustion; that is, I can't make the *most* of my opportunities for enjoyable household activities (which *all* of them might be, if I could but trip it up and downstairs and all over the place, without 'saving myself'). Nevertheless, what I undertake at all to do, is great fun. And the *simplification* and independence of doing every mortal thing for one's self really gives one a sense of human reality that must mean more power to one's elbow. And it is amusing to reflect that, if I choose, I *can* descend to the laundry, and wash and iron if I Want to (!) in the very middle of the night, and NOBODY may object with any justification! Of the psychology of the Solitary State, I am having much opportunity to judge; and it is all full of interest. I am so much interested, and so eager for some miracle of productiveness to befall my tired mind, that I grudge my sleeping-time, and I'm so sorry to add that I somehow invariably find it's 7.35 exactly; — the *moment* after I've drawn a deep sigh of delight over FIVE-O'CLOCK-in-a-Garden, and turned over once! What things I might have out of those hours — Five to Eight — if I could *only* keep my eyes open.

But if neither Black Coffee (twice a day) — nor the Desire for Perfection will do it, what shall I try next?

Oh, Oh, News! Guess what *I* found, under the leaves — quite unsuspected; even utterly Denied by Uncle: —

SIX PEACHES

And *every one* a perfect, an exquisite, whole and flawless peach, sun-burnt, sun-flushed — *couleur de reveille de l'Alison* — (*almost*) d'Eleven o'Clock in the Morning! And *just* ripening perfectly.

One I ate: (yesterday.)

Two I ate;

Six I'll eat myself! —

(Since you'll be too late.)

Solemn, ceremonial peaches! A fig for Hafiz! — (says Posy Khayyam with her mouth full.)

August 22nd

. . . I fear you may be worried a bit if I don't say something about the Book. So I'll say the only thing that *can* be said: I have spared no method, silly or sane, of goading Brother Ass every day. Now there remain still a few agonizingly important trifles, nothing spatially considered if only my brain would work any more; and it is up to my Angel to do 'em for me. So it must pluck a long wing-quill out, for the sake of Posybianca, and fix up the Book in short order. And then more angels will take me to heaven in the guise of a little dead ant! But what kind of a Book it will be, *I* can't tell you, so I'd rather not think of it any more. Scullery work is better than literature for the weary; I know that.

'Bring me my Household gloves!'
(New refrain for Golden Shoes) . . .

To Hermann and Dorothy Hagerdorn

11 ELMWOOD AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE
15 *August*, 1911

MY DEAR, PET HAGERDORNS:

. . . I am trying to take care of this house, the old house, the Babies, afar off . . . and lastly for adventure and for rest, live quite alone here . . . and cling to Solitude, as clear and clean as I can keep it, to freshen my mind and teach me something . . . I added Vegetarianism to Solitude, in order to gather in as much profitable adventure as I might, since Outing is denied me for the season. (What's the matter with Innings? I inquired, after sending my Soul through the Invisible!) . . . My spirits rise, the moment the carpenters go; and the House fills up suddenly with Solitude; and the sparkle and the foam settle on the full cup. I have been sore baffled and thwarted and overworked at it, and too sleepy, evenings, to see a vision, if one came. So none has come yet. But I know very well it's my own fault; and when I have worked off my sloth, and if I am good, and when the Book is most done; surely I must see Something. And I may come down some morning at five o'clock and find an Angel, drinking out of my little fresh milk-jar! (The pint looks so inviting.)

To Lionel S. Marks

11 ELMWOOD AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE
1 *September*, 1911

DEAREST:

. . . I've found out another wrinkle; — (it never has worked yet; but it must be very efficacious, if only your mind is working at all, and you can spell Conn. — I mean the name of the next State, south). Besides breakfasting very lightly, I lunch very lightly, too; but early. I take some sandwiches and the coffee-pot up to the Study at 12 or 12.15 and there brew black coffee only and lie down flat awhile thereafter . . . with the result that in half an

hour . . . I am able to read Bernard Shaw and keep it up for hours without being able to do anything else! Wunderbar! Pyramidal! Then, at dinner-time — you see — a perfect 'h—l of a gorge' — carrots and canteloupe; and read in bed from 9.30 till 11 without remorse. . . .

Oh, would the Lord ONLY reward my fasting and prayer, and flagellation and drudgery and constant hope with a fresh Wind of utterance. I *do* not want to dangle along after that *Piper* forever and ever. If we could only *forget* him; and live on the proceeds! I think I will sit up all night, to-night, for a change and catch an Angel and WRRRRESTLE with him. And not a feather will I leave him, till he Bless me!

You and I must do all manner of things this winter, if only we are well. Here are we, with a jolly-looking place, *quite* large enough to swing any *reasonable* cat in; and all good old Cambridge to ignore and trample on. Now or never! What shall we do? — Picture the accomplished Fra Leo, too, by that time, fairly on his dimpled legs, straddling from raft to raft of Persian rugs, and poking his little hands through the viols and violins, all the way upstairs! They drive me delirious, they are so incredibly beautiful, those children of OURS. And I mean to have them home by the 9th of September. But I shall not bring either of them to meet you at the dock (it's too long and uncertain). So be not disappointed, my own, when you see just *ME*. . . .

September, 1911. I fanatically restrung my Blue Harp . . . for I feel while that Sign and Symbol is dishevelled and distraught I may not be otherwise myself.

September, 1911, 7.45 P.M. Oh, heavenly close to a rainy toilsome day — my Babies are

AT HOME

Ninth day of the ninth month I brought my babies triumphing, into their Own House.

. . . My heart was fair bursting with sacramental things

when I brought them in. . . . Before they went upstairs we had to break bread. They were both very sleepy and hungry, but full of sweetness and baby-laughing.

September, 1911. In spite of all the trials and drawbacks of the summer . . . I've had a blessed chance to think quietly, early mornings all alone, and to go back to my childish sense of communing . . . And I've got to feel, again, that precious sense.

. . . Oh me, it frightens me, the dazzling joy and delight I have, so often, and so often, these hours and days and years in the Land of Promise, after my long, long lonely youth in the Wilderness.

September, 1911. Have I — oh, *Have I* a cook-maid? Is her name — oh, Is it — Katie Egan?

Is she twenty-one?

Has she two deep dimples in a broad sweet-tempered rosy face?

Will she come, as she promised, Sunday noon?

If she is my Katie, all these things are true.

November, 1911. But it's a feeble frame on me, I do declare, these days — and sore ill-pleased am I to wear such a cumbersome thing — I that always feel (when I'm myself) that I'm mounted for a Mazeppa ride the day, (and the wind whistles by my ears with mental travel!)

To Clarence H. Blackall

11 ELMWOOD AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
16 *November*, 1911

DEAR MR. BLACKALL:

Thank you truly for your kind and friendly letter.

After such bitter loss,[1] one gathers in, with the sharpest wistfulness, all the affectionate memories of her, as pure treasure.

You know that our Mother was one selfless flame of devotion for us two children. And I know you will be glad

[1] The death of her mother.

to hear that she was *herself* our most miraculous comfort; during the three days we had her transfigured face to look upon, before we gave it up forever in this world.

I wish with all my heart you might have seen her; radiant — *young* as I cannot remember even in her buoyant youth — with the look of a triumphant warrior-saint; — a Face overflowing with all the beauties soul could long for; and shining with Love everlasting.

Only to look at her was to be filled with joy beyond understanding. It held my heart together; and always shall.

Your sincere friend
JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

January 1, 1912.

New Year, New Year
Bless us Truly!

The day is fine, the first Chinese lily is blooming, the hearth-fire kept a live flame overnight — It *feels* like a good Year! So, wings to my heels, now; and songs all over me, and Brother Ass, rouse up now and show yourself Pegasus!

And L. and I, and the glorious two — high — high above all city smoke, we'll race the horses of the Sun, that will we! And no more threatening from silly bones and bodies.

'Awake up, my Glory; awake, lute and harp.'

To Katherine Lee Bates

NEW YEAR'S, 1912

God bless you, dearest K. L. B., and your New Year. You are such an inveterate giver of gifts, that I can find no other word to say. The darling Carol that you sent! It goes into the Babes' treasury, after a while, for the good day when I hope to make of them my living two-voice *Canzoniere*, to say and sing to me all my chosen poems.

As for your wonderful words of my book, I don't know

how to thank you for that divining heart of yours. For I am far from deserving any such praise for the lame version of my hopes and longings that I was able to get out. But it *is* sweet to have a few friends so spiritual-minded that they take for *real* and visible, the farthest longings of one's struggling soul. I did, indeed, *wish* into the poems all that you find; but I know very well what worlds below and behind that wish, the written thing lags and loses breath.

Indeed, no, the body — Brother Ass! — is a sorry failure these days; and only my constant readiness for miracles cheers me at all to believe I can ever again go 'walking and leaping, and praising God' according to my will. But 1912 *feels* better somehow, and the day is fine; — and I've *seen* Miracles long before this!

(Now do you s'pose I can some time see *you* arrive here for a week-end, if I am good and very *believing?* ??)

It would be such a delight; and to my Man as well.

Blessings on you, and prayers the flaming-est for Songs and Works of fire and snow, through all your year.

Your very devoted

January, 1912. Arrives to me Gordon Craig's book on 'The Art of the Theatre' and much enlivens my hours of bed, knitting, and short mind-flights.

Suggestive and tremendously stimulating, with dogmatism of erratic genius. It makes me resolve three more note-books.

To Richard Burton

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
16 *February*, 1912

DEAR RICHARD BURTON:

. . . A beautiful thing to make such an elegy for your brother poet: and that of such rich stuff that it makes warm roots to stir and bud in one's mind while one reads — the gift of all gifts that endears a Poem to its readers.

Your wonderful ever-present sense of this world's beauty gives me tremendous joy. I am always teasing and vexing people — and prodding them with a broad-sword, to know if they can't love and *remember* the thousand and one different *kinds* of day-times as I do — and to find out *why* so many writers can possibly be that ungrateful and complaining towards Life, when the beauty of the Earth itself *surges* upon us all day and every day, with breakers and tides of Beauty almost too much to be endured.

That is why I must re-read the poem now, before I set to work on the play I am trying to finish; because it's a dull day outside, and the light is flat. . . .

Your friend indeed

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

March, 1912. I was miserable enough to-day . . . but a lovely letter from Mrs. Raymond Robbins restored me. If any real *working people* love my poems, that's enough to put strength into me.

March, 1912. And as usual — the prospect of diving straightway into the Big Wave that's after me seems the best thing and the only thing. And my spirits rise to meet it.[1]

But when they take up — of my broken fragments that remain — twelve baskets full?

There seems to be no rest left on the earth for me. Nothing but trumpets sounding to war.

To Anna Branch

Lady Day, 25 March, 1912

DEAREST ANNA:

The blessing and breath of this Spring festival go with you all the way! I love the name of the Annunciation Day; — and no quaintness of mediæval exactitude can keep it from sending out fragrance year to year. How good it was to *see* you here, Star-sister; and to think of your Bon Voyage.

[1] Before an operation.

It is good to me, also, to go sailing that same day, since I must — all the way to Kingdom-Come, and back again.[1] For you and I know that all adventures belong to that one Adventure — even in their gladdest and sorriest aspects; and while Pain is surely not good, Wonders are hidden behind, and beneath, and I shall come back with my hands full, surely, when I *do* come. And you will know all about it, wise Child. (So Pain can't have me, till I'm caught by the collar; — and Pain *shan't* have me, the moment I can break free again. But I will have all the treasures out of her caves and her towers; and some for you, and some for me, and some for you, and some for me. And there will be another Terror knocked out of the way.)

I chattered so madly at you that I never told you a most delightful message from Robert Schauffler. He wrote an 'Atlantic' essay lately — I *think* it was he — on the manifest duty and delight (for poets) of buying their fellow poets' books, out of every earning. (Or else he wrote to some such Contributor's Club a message, to say that he always *did;* — that was it! And to deny that new poets were indifferent to the works of others.) He stated in his letter that out of his first earnings, this winter, he had instantly purchased 'Rose of the Wind' and 'The Singing Man!' — To his great glee, the authoress (whose name was Stearns, I *think*) replied in a personal letter, saying that she herself, living up to her own exhortations, had — with the money from her Contributor's Club paper — rushed out to purchase — 'Rose of the Wind' and 'The Singing Man!'

Now, aren't we glad we're living? — And won't you be even gladder, dear Anna, when you set foot in that most blessed country, and the souls of the Saints come around to smile upon your joy in their dove-cotes and pathways? And won't you give a kiss from me to the wall of the *Portiuncula?* A star-kiss. And get the *top*-most, *end*-most room at '*The Subasio*' Inn (Assisi) *closest* to the Church. For that was mine, and you can step out on the little bal-

[1] An operation.

cony at midnight, in your night-gown, and look upon the whole Umbrian valley, and down to St. Maria degli Angeli, and all the footsteps of St. Francis.

26 March

Now blessings on you, child! Have the most wonderful time that ever was; and keep well, too. I am inexpressibly happy to think of the Sights you are going to See.

Forgive this stupid letter; and take the glow.

God bless you.

Your

JOSEPHINE

To Mary Mason

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
21 April, 1912

DEAR MARY:

Behold me — in answer to your kind and truly sympathetic letter — *downstairs* for some hours, and *hooked up, in a truly dress*, for the first time in a blue — a thoroughly blue moon.

You know what surgical 'comfort' and quiet is; so I needn't expatiate upon the necessitous pain and misery of the first ten days — before the next ten of utter supine nullity. (Somehow, silly as it is, after a few massacres it becomes unbearable to have people think a surgical operation means waking with a Yule-tide smile, out of a blissful dream of ether, to a complete heaven of full bloom and six-legged activity!) Now comes the 'getting one's strength again' performance; and I must say no more of it all, after the horrors this week has plunged the whole world of pity in.[1] I hope you didn't know anybody on that doomed ship. Whether one knew any creature or didn't, the ghastly grief of it all, and the futile separations of husbands and wives, have made the whole earth seem unreal to me, and

[1] The loss of the Titanic.

life like a bad dream that ever such sorrow could be. . . .

May, 1912. I thought of a long Song to-night; a Long Song; and it shall be to me for the turn of the Tide; and make me well again.

June, 1912. This third day of glorious weather — up to the Study I went — and oh, sudden, it thundered on the left, and a Song struck me — yea, I verily believe.

SILVER LAKE, *August*, 1912. Saw a lovely Deer — another one, browsing close by the Study . . . and watched it some ten minutes before it disappeared into the woods, the lovely darling — switching its white fluffed tail!

It was an Assisi anniversary day. So I was as pleased as need be!

August, 1912. New moon! — and out again (Oh, seventy times seven!) — I bring '*Fra Lupone di Gubbio*' with the prayers of a broken spirit.

Fearful struggles to speak with the tongue of a wolf given to poetry — attempting, meanwhile, to crawl about with the body of a broken caterpillar after a nervous breakdown.

August, 1912. Glory be!

This morning I actually completed the emendations (so far as I see them now) on Act I . . . and I feel like a beatified idiot who has succeeded in folding a napkin, after two years' toil and struggle.

September, 1912,

Gloria in Excelsis:
I've Done the
Second Act

Finish Act III { for bulk and matter at least, and most of the diction — 600 lines

and last of 'The Wolf of Gubbio.'

To Rachel and Ralph Barton Perry

SILVER LAKE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
7 September, 1912

Hail, — Welcome Home, — Hosanna and God bless you, — dearest Neighbors!

The one cloud in the blue, and the one Bat across the Moon it is — that we are not, *cannot* be, there before

you

to open your own house-doors, and drape the balustrade with fig-trees and cucumber-vines — with myrtle and vegetable marrows! — Io, Io, pæan! — (Neighborette, please put in the accents.) (This is to be rendered as an Ode.)

It is *too* mean, in plain prose, that you should come home to mostly empty houses. But our babes (and maids too) have thriven, this summer; and they have to give up such spacious joys of playhouses and 'country-stores,' that I don't know how they'll ever condescend to Cambridge again. As to Lionel and me, briefly, we've spent a *purgatorial* season (in spite of visual delights), for the air has seemed very enervating to us; and the fierce heat of July did for *me*, had I needed to be reduced any further. So we look forward to making holiday with *you* people, to atone for all our disappointments of the year. And mind you come quick, and breakfast, lunch, dine, kneip (pe) with us, sans intermission, for whole weeks! We had hoped to feed you all, first thing, as you drove from the docks. Please come and let us feed you when *we* arrive from the station. That (D.V.) will be Monday, the *16th of September*, as ever was — by four o'clock in the afternoon! ! O happy day, O noble hour! — Bless me, Bottom, I am translated! ! ! ! And Fra Bernardino will be *strutting* — che cosa! And his Bobbo will be a dago-man likewise — and we'll all riot and reach and brag of our babes and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth. Indeed, if such a godly affection and holy charity should move you, can't you come strolling down the street

and walk into our garden, and *be there* to see us? For *I* don't come to an empty house if I can help it, not I!! (And Nursie Louise will be there some hours earlier in the day, to open the windows. Our trains might get us there by three.)

Some nice people of the heaven-sent tribe of Smiths have occupied it during the summer; but I understand that the garden is a jungle of weeds; and only the chimneys are faintly descried above the Savoy Cabbages (that grew greatly during the uninterrupted rains of August). And the Golden Bantams *are all* crowing fit to disturb the neighbors in the grey of the dawn.

I wax delirious at the thought of neighborly intercourse . . . I will no more. Bless you, bless you. I hope you've had the finest time that *almost-ever* was; and I hope it goes on unbroken. And I hope we hear all about it in One Thousand and One Tales.

Your devoted
L. S. M. *and* J. PEABODY MARKS

To Margarethe Müller

192 BRATTLE STREET
24 *September*, 1912

This is a Kiss for Margarethe! — And a thousand blessings on her! And a sigh to think I couldn't find in Chocorua anything 'fit' for her birthday; — save the Milky Way — and the grape-bloom on the mountains; — and a red roe-deer (but I couldn't catch her —) — Oh, oh, yes, and 'Anselt' and Fra Leo — but you can't have them to keep! Only their picture.

Here is Fra Leo's; — and I *will* remark — modestly — that it is the most beautiful picture that ever was. 'Anselt's' were not nearly so good of her; so she waits.

But how long are *we* to wait before we see you, O dear and far and fickle?

Your own
JOSEPHINE

To Agnes Freer

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
6 *November*, 1912

MY OWN DEAR LAMB! —

(Which is English for Agnes):

. . . So, like that everlasting Spider of Bruce's, I pick up my hopeless quill — and expect to copy as much as five lines of the play I wrote last summer, before some other minor evil seizes me by my last remaining hairs! . . .

If only I ever *write* again — I shall be well, I am sure.

But to be cut off from my Angel, my Canzone like this — it's an evil for which I have no name; and churlish as it seems, it makes my Soul sit up and cry her eyes out, when my battered body goes to sleep nights.

I am your own and please don't forget the things I *did* once write that *you* did love!

November, 1912. New Moon.

A year ago to-day I saw Mother's face for the last time: that beatified face that was my miracle all this year.

And still the record I have tried to write of it chokes me with the wildest tears, as it did then; and I have nothing to show, or to give, but new efforts and a still unfinished 'Gubbio.' Great Heavens — to be *two* years struggling for the breath of the Spirit. — I did think of a scheme for a kind of Book of Praise — a set of Love Songs to glorify the Human Day. But the 'Little Women' poem that was to try to speak of Mother is just as far as ever. They all are. Oh, when shall I cease to be a dead dumb Thing and my soul all *cluttered* with my own broken bones?

November, 1912. The Heart Beat is in one sense the basis of all that is Communal; that all men share. . . . All life locked up in its regularly recurrent rhythm. And it is that rhythm that appears in our love songs, war songs, all the poetry of the human cycle from lullabies to funeral chants.

In the fundamental crises of life . . . men and motives crystallize into the ritual of rhythm which is the most democratic beauty there is.

thing

To Helen Keller

11 *November*, 1912

MY DEAR AND WONDERFUL FRIEND:

What a pleasure you have given me — to add to the pleasures of your beautiful letter last Spring! This lovely portrait of you came out of its wrappings like a benediction; — and came — (must I be ashamed to say it? — Yes, I ought) — when I sorely needed it, feeling harassed beyond measure and deeply depressed, because a thousand petty trials have kept me for months from finishing a new play or even *hoping* to make a new song!

Thank you from my heart for loving 'The Singing Man.' I did *so* want it to take its message far. And I am an impatient creature, who can't bear to be *passive;* so that this summer tedium of convalescence, with its *useless* feeling of complete negation, has made me lose all my feathers with low spirits! But now, here's cool weather coming! And I mean to come out and see you very soon, if I can. Moreover, I have a plan which *must* be carried out in a few weeks. My friend Mrs. Dreyfus must bring you *here* to see me, in her motor; so that I may show you my darling little two children. For they are beautiful enough to give you pleasure; Alison, my little witch of a daughter, four years old — and her baby brother, 'Fra Leo,' two-and-a-half.

It makes me happy and expectant to think what happiness your seeing fingers must gather, from the touch of that heavenly sweet *texture* of childhood; and I long to thrust my armful of sheer Heaven into your wise arms, and enjoy with you all those sayings, straight from God Almighty, that are written in their dimples and curious hands, their fragrant hair and funny little noses and pushing feet, and heartrending perfectness!

Yes, I know you would love them. And that would be my best thanks to you for the delight you give me.

Faithfully yours

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

To Hermann Hagedorn

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
Halloween, 1912

Thousand blessings on you, and ten thousand thanks, dear Poet!

This book is a *treasure;* even finer than I guessed and heard, on the good evening when you read us 'Wings,' and 'The Cobbler,' and a few others, under our own roof-tree. We have *both* read, with equal joy — No; I can't help thinking that *I* am reading with a peculiar gratitude that makes *my* joy extraordinary. For I have been a broken bird this long while; and keen Poetry gives me that throb in a healing wing, that restlessness and stir in a benighted spirit that brings song a little nearer to me, too! You *know* I cannot say clearlier than that how splendid I find it.

It's a great advance over the earlier book, lovely as that was; I mean technically; a *splendid* Singing.

The heart of it couldn't be truer, we both believe, since it is yours, and Dorothy's.

Faithfully your friend

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

To Fola LaFollette and George Middleton

Twelfth Day Eve! 1913

Blessings and delight upon you both together, my very dear friends. And your sweet Christmas greeting was a freshening message that made us wish very much you were *here*. We were quite alone, save for the roistering Babes; — and it seemed a great waste of grown-up good-will!

Sooth to say, it came almost near being a bit dismal this year, with so many minor trials that I put off my reply,

on purpose, for a tranquil hour. Here it is. — For though I am still in suspense (rather despairing suspense) about 'Gubbio' (no reply yet from Mr. Tyler), to-morrow's *Twelfth Night*, and the feast of the Magi! And of lights. And a New Moon coming, early Tuesday morning the 7th — Saint Distaff's Day, children — so get out your work, and dip your quills and tune your pipes, and we'll all celebrate the New Moon of the New Work of the New Year, with prayers and hopes and determined carousal!

Do let me hear of you, once in a while. I long to know how you do. And I've just been saying to my L. S. M. how much I wish you could come and spend a summer close by *us* somewhere, if we do not get Abroad this year — for all our high hopes. (It looks more impossible than ever.) Whatever happens or *doesn't* happen, though (it's the DOESN'TS that are trying to shake my elbow, now), I shall dip *my* quill into a brand-new Play, on Tuesday morning — or know the reason why. 'Tis the best way to be off with the old! — 'And why not to-morrow?' you very properly ask. And I promptly reply — because *that's* dedicated to lyrical poetry . . . and . . . (and the January mark-down sales of most everything that ever play-wrights must wear!)

To continue, L. S. M. said, 'It would, indeed. You must keep in touch with them, and see if they won't come East in the summer.' And to end (pro tem) I wish you all the joys you look for, and a thousand unforeseen. I know the first wish means Happy Work. And what the second means, God knows. And that's bound to be the best.

Always yours

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

February, 1913. O my God, for some Day of Visitation again! My New York journey was so beautiful, and I did manage in wonderful little unforeseen ways to bring about some small, small good to all manner of people and causes and things. . . . And I seemed to find my pockets so full of faëry gifts, I was jumping for joy. Then back to this Herculaneum I come, and all my gifts and glories wither to

ashes and stones: where people would rather look to Emerson than Christ; and be acceptable to Harvard authorities than to the glorious fellowship of the prophets.

February, 1913. *Three years ago to-day* my glorious little Sun was born. And thank God for him, and his radiant beauty and every heavenly message we read in his every heavenly dimple, his eyes like the Christ child's, his red, red rose cheeks — his mischievous star-fish fingers, his perfect body; his two marvellous little feet that still say *Holy, Holy, Holy*, in unison. There are not *words* in the world to tell how beautiful he is. Bless him . . . bless him.

February, 1913. Anything like the sheer nervous fury to be Doing, Writing, or Saying something of use to somebody has almost never possessed me before to the verge of frantic misery — Oh! to be helping something or somebody!

To Agnes Freer

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
24 *March*, 1913

DEAREST AGNES:

. . . *Perhaps* we are to have a grand holiday soon; *very* soon. But we are just now in such a *death-struggle* of preparation to go, and take the Babes properly, that we may be too shattered to sail!

We are *booked* to Sail; April 12th, S.S. Princess Irene, North German Lloyd, from New York. And our *plan* was, to take the babes and leave them safe in Switzerland with remote cousins of mine and my sister; while L. and I went on a heavenly yachting cruise in the Mediterranean (Greece — Sicily — Egypt) with my Chadbournes of New York; returning *via* Venice, in seven or eight weeks, to take the Babes and sister and go to some heavenlier place yet, for the rest of the summer! (Home September 16th.) So far, *magnifique!* — But the cousins who *were* so mad to 'have those adorable babies' with them are now quite uncertain where they'll be; and poor Sister can't have any care whatever, even with a nurse there. So we are cabling

at the eleventh hour to a (Roman Catholic) English nursing Sisterhood, on the top of *Fiesole*, to receive our babes and their nurse when we come — and guard them in the bosom of the Church (!) while we collect our atoms and try for our holiday! (But we cannot *hear* explicitly in time and must chance it.) So picture us, L. and me, with our kittens in our mouths, mewing up and down the coast, for some place to lay 'em safely! . . .

May, 1913. The Yacht: Between Girgenti and Syracuse. . . . To-night I read them some of the idyls of Theocritus — sailing by the very coast and pastureland of Polyphemus. For we have spent a wonderful day ashore at Girgenti — with our brains fairly turned in the dizzying sunlight, before the riot of bloom and colors; creatures and myths; lambs and kids, shepherds and goatherds; osier baskets and water and wine jars; olive-trees and the blossoming olive; almond; peach; above all the pine-trees; honey-colored roads and walls, bordered with purple flowering weeds. Orchards red underneath with poppies; yellow thistles and rose-red clover; acanthus growing near the temples; — oh, oh, what rapturous beauty!

. . . So back to the yacht again — to turn it all to music in a dream.

May, 1913. Sailing — sailing — and reading all at once Baedeker, Holy Bible, Wm. S.' 'Antony and Cleopatra,' and Theocritus. Sunset over Cythera; sunset colors behind the veiled mainland of Greece itself; — the horizon all fused in opalescence — two sea-gulls following fast; — and the young moon in our zenith. And to starboard — all blue and lilac lights and shades and pallors — CRETE, Crete, with snow on her mountain peaks and cloud hovering, drifting, lying soft along the ridges, settling to rest upon the valleys: Crete. So we are here: we have come to the enchanted isles, where all history is as a dream and life seems not life but a parable: if one could but know what it means.

May, 1913. My First Nightingale.

We had climbed up and down and over the palaces of Minos, the King of Crete. . . . And out in the blinding sunlight we went again — along the edge of the fields golden with golden daisies and looked upon the towering oil-jars (3000 B.C.) that had lain buried those thousands of years: and suddenly — I heard a voice and stopped to listen, even as L. made sign to me. . . . We all stood rooted like the servants of the Emperor.

And it was my Nightingale! Nothing could have been more perfect than the place of that noonday rest: the bank of a little stream, with olive-trees leaning over: a deep field of wheat and golden things, and browsing sheep: grey grey olives centuries old, stationed like columns below the last terrace of the palace of Minos. And now and then, a lamb bleated and the little black donkey neighed. And now and then one hidden frog close by us quoted Aristophanes. It was all perfect even to the beauty of the girl who brought us flowers as we left and the lad to whom I said — quavering with fearful joy and suspense, '*Παρακαλῶ, πῶς νομίζεται αὐτὸ βουνό*,' and with no look of disdain or astonishment quoth he, carefully, '*Πειρός*.'

My Muse come back to me; for comfort that I had to leave the brookside and the grey olives and the golden fields without showing them all to my daughter, my darling, my Firstling; and the goldenest of little Boys.

Cambridge, September, 1913. This morning I brought my lace pillow upstairs to the Study and set it on top of my whirligig bookcase to see how that will be when I want to stand up and use my limbs and think about wine, woman, and song. For labor incessant is to be the keynote and the organ point and the deep reservoir of refreshment this season, to my expiring wits. This is to be the place where I ply loom and lace pillow and do as much and as many poems of 'The Spinning Woman' as God allows. (I believe I'll practise spinning, too, on my distaff from Ithaca.)

September, 1913. Oh, but I am Happy Again, these mornings — I am inconceivably Happy again. For the Morning-sense is with me now I wake, and I hear my

Canzone saying the things I must do. I am as grateful as the man at the Pool of Bethesda. And gladness is pouring into me as sweetness into the grapes. Yesterday and to-day such a light came into me, regarding that next Song Book, that I cannot contain myself for joy, even to think about it, and how I'd like to make it. For into it shall go all the young longings and sufferings and isolations and scattered lights of my Young Young Days, that cause me still an anguish to look back upon — they have seemed such painful Waste. But now from this hill-top I see how they shall not be Waste, but stuff for the best music I have in me to make — and companionship for all the Young I do so long to cherish.

Michaelmas, September, 1913. Saint Michael and All Angels playing on their viols early, early in the morning, and me — catching the over-tones — all filled up with bliss.

And I'm up in the Study now, looking at five Quills I just plucked out of the Stratford bundle . . . figuring to me the next five Works I have to work; to wit two Song Books (very clear and vivid), two Plays (not so clear), and one Song Book more (a little farther off). Who wouldn't jump for joy to have such things to think of?

September, 1913. And to-day — wresting my wits from the *Volumes Next* they are trying to attach themselves to (barnacle wise), I managed to make the prose connections to Act III of 'Gubbio' and mail it to H. M. Co., to be clear of that copy and that labor with this month and set up my looms and cobwebs in mine upper chamber, my secret Bower — my Cinderella attic — for the next poetry the Lord sees fit to send into my bosom. (May it be full measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over!)

October 4, 1913. The Day of the best beloved Saint.[1] And I sit in my little attic study before the first page of 'Gubbio': and I feel so filled with beatitude thinking of the Saint I can't waste the Day with thinking of anything else. He has been a very present help to me all this year

[1] Saint Francis.

through blackest hours. He has brought me blessings uncountable with his insight and his praises. And halting as this little play is, I cannot but know there is blessing in it, and it will take a gleam of him wherever it goes. I know, I know, I *know*. A wonderful eighteen days of beatitude I've had, with the sense and trust that my Canzone is come home again.

October, 1913. Still so beatific over the two weeks' Peace I've had, I simply cannot work. The chance to think over and count and glory in all my Sources of Replenishment, for the first time in four years — it does seem like that — to wake again, still on the hill-top, and peer into my heavenly springs and dip my hands in and make sure of them — and flick the bright drops into my heart and my feathers.

Oh, but it is strange and very natural, and full of joy unspeakable! — So I am just pegging down the tents; tents to dwell in, I hope, these three years to come.

To Stark Young

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
9 *October*, 1913

DEAR MR. YOUNG:

Both of your good, good letters came safely at last to our appreciative and grasping hands. From the depths of packing-cases and trunks, from attic heights and cellar solitudes, we thanked you, while we dusted, swept, searched, pieced, ploughed, hoed, weeded, cooled, and hunted cooks. —

Now, — O rapture! — (Heaven send it be not that 'first fine careless' one) — we SEEM to have some human treasures in the house (besides the babes!) — and two are Italian (born near Gloucester!) and one is French-Canadian, and all are friends. And to this extravagant tune we mean to live, while they'll stay to do the work, and let us do ours; — and while they *stay* in tune.

When can you come and see us? You are here and now bidden to *visit* (not call); so don't forget.

I am up to my ears in proofs (of 'Gubbio'), and it seems no jot nearer production; but I have ceased to torment my soul over anything that happens to it — so well the blessing worked.

Husband is madly overworked and tired even at the beginning, I grieve to say. But this house-tunefulness is doing well for him, too; I expect to see him gain, even under the *whole* work of the Engineering Department, and the tons of Hütte that he's editing.

As for me, I'm so happy in the sudden *chance* to work (here in my little attic study) that I've hardly put my head out of the house since September 16th when we landed. I've read nothing whatever and I've no idea what's going on, even about my own affairs. But let me tell you, the lovely Babes have waxed mightily in girth and color; you must come quick if you want to see *little* children any more — ah me! They are beautiful beyond description, and the only news I have to relate — and indeed the mainspring of this letter (*now*, this hour, when I ought to be correcting *Proof*) is — what, what do you guess? What's the loveliest thing you can imagine? Why: — to hear Anselt and Brother (on their way to bed) saying alternate verses of the *Cantico del Sole!* — It burst upon me suddenly, Saint Francis Day (the 4th — I sent you a blessing) — that of all things on earth for little children to start a Canzoniere with — the 'Song of Brother Sun' was the one poem of all the world. And it's the *first Poem* I've ever taught them; and they are sweetly stammering — no, they don't stammer, they transpose, now and then (as Brother, waxing sleepy, but still zealous, day before yesterday, uttered it,

'Be thou crazed my Lord, wif' all my s' creechers.')

But to see him spread out his little hands and say —

'Be thou praised, my Lord, of all thy creatures;
Above all, Brother Sun!'

And Anselt *can't* wait to say, like a talking nightingale —

'Who gives the Day, and lightens us there-with! . . . Oh, next it's Sister Moon! Let *me*, let me!'

Well, if this won't fetch you soon, nothing can. Do let us hear how your work is, and how your candlesticks are, and your waistcoats and your Coffini jewels and your Dori boxes and your Ox and your Ass and everything that is yours!

With warmest Hail-Fellow's from mine (absent) Engineer, and loving remembrances from the Glorious ones,

I am always your mindful friend

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

October, 1913. Decided to begin Vegetarian career — or, strictly speaking, fleshless food — Now, *forthwith* — To-day — Dinner Time! And as a penitent, indeed, I do begin; and sore abashed that personal indifference, not to say ever telling myself that 'this one' was already lifeless anyhow — has so long kept me from doing one simple thing towards a happier heart.

. . . I think it's fun that I unwittingly made it come true — my word at Chocorua a year ago — that I couldn't finish 'The Wolf of Gubbio' and still be eating of the creatures.

December, 1913. A very nice afternoon. Miss Amy Lowell came out to tea with me after the Symphony, and congenial talk spread out that brief space of time into an amplitude of confidence and cheer. . . . I found myself saying to her, 'There are just two things people may have that make them always interesting, always the friends one looks forward to, "Zest for Life for its own sake, and a Sense of Form."' She has them both.

To Stark Young

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
December, 1913

If you could only have seen us all, dear Mr. Young! — And if you could have seen the Babes that very evening, after bath — rolling upon your Fleece, your shining Fleece, in their warmish, tightish night-gowns, with rosy feet

waving to the skies; and chuckling with rapture as they '*softed*' the depths of those silver ringlets, and poked their little noses in. '*I'd like to sleep here, just like this, yes I would*,' bubbled Brother, wagging his cheeks to and fro over 'Lambie.' 'I'd like to stay here, *all the night*, asleep; this Lambie's so soft; I think it's a *lovely, lovely*, Lambie.' 'And why did Mr. Yo-ung send it to us?' asked Daughterkin, for sake of the well-expected answer, 'Because he *loves* you and he knew you would love IT!' — They were and *are* a sight with it. How beautiful it is; and what kind, precisely? I had no idea what manner of thing it was to be — skin though you named it. I must tell you, too, the sweetest, most spontaneous thing they do with it. Twice since then I've felt very much used up by sudden Grippy onslaughts that have pestered my winter. And the moment that Babes looked into my bedroom in the morning and saw me still prostrate — 'Oh, Mamma, aren't *you* up this morning? Do you still feel *not-well* again?' they cried; — and without a word I could hear they scampered off to the nursery, and came scampering back presently, like two small angels with a cloud — bearing their 'Lambie' between them, to 'spread it over my feet' for a special delight! — Aren't you proud? — I chatter so much of them that I am not writing — though never forgetting — about my *bee-oo-ti-ful* fan — a dream of joy — or Lionel's spur, which pleased him all to pieces, and for which I am to give you heartiest thanks ever. It's such a gracious, lovely game, this one of extravagant, prodigal *givings* — here in a place and time where it's all but extinct — that the lecture I was going to read you has somehow evaporated. But here now; viz. 'Oh, never, *never* do it again' . . . that is, so extravagantly, so thoroughly, so wantonly! Never — *Never*more; — save with 1/150th of such spend-thriftiness!' . . .

Do you know, it's something quite real (and hideous) to me, this year, the Gordian knot of chances that makes Here and Now like an ice-house to live in, for the bundle of real life that our little household makes. And yet here we are and here's our human puzzle. . . .

Poets can't live, at present, anywhere about. All their life is spent in hopes of secret dangerous meeting with the Muse. — Oh Dear, Oh Dear, I mustn't go on. But your wail of last November, poor child, reduced me to kindred tears before I took my pen in hand to comfort you. The whole crass, undeniable, stupid answer is: This country is horribly big; — the size of a score of countries. 'A little one' must needs *be* a 'thousand' to sit up and think three thoughts together; for *he shall have no fellows* and no following — unless he be a lucky Giant. It takes a mileage book and a week's vacation to have a page of talk. And your heart is like to crack with loneliness any day — for one word with the lonely wight who needs you most, that moment. I shudder to think of having to dwell in Texas as you do, no matter how adorable I hope and believe your house is; and when I come back to my little house here, prancing with inner music from somewhere or other, and eager to kiss those chanting Babes good-night — *I shudder again.* For I've lived here now (before and after I was wed) fifteen years; — and I know it's not the dizzying *miles* that separate us Markses from rich human signs of life and kindred. But it's some strange state of mind that freezes the eyes in my head; and I'd like to know, once for all, which of us is mad or blind. To my feverish sense of fleeting human lifetime and lovely Earth, these are our richest years, L. S. M.'s and mine; for little as we are and landless, and 'good'less (comparatively), we cannot deny that we have — thank God — for the little while, such human gifts, in our own fellowship — in the blissful two; — in 'a mind to sing.' And yet we never put our heads into another town that the people there do not seem to count our friendship more as *we* count friendship — for a treasure — than here where we *must* offer and bestow it and spend it again, and again — seeing clearly that it seems to be nothing more than the rattling of pebbles on a window-pane to most. I do thank you always, for any words of yours that serve to take me to my *far-off* friends — or bring them to me. *It is written,* for my life, that they

are the friends I must have, and go without, and be comforted with, forever. And I must just STOP this futile and silly repining after more 'fellowship' that can be seen and talked to. And I must just make my isolation into a strength; and turn it to use; and get to work. For a pretty tale of woe would it seem to the truly woeful, that one couldn't find neighbors to take of the wistful rich-feelings of one's heart; and couldn't find people enough to sit down in a circle to open their mouths with wonder, while one's heaven-made children pranced and gambolled before them, so many times more beautifully than other children can!

I haven't one atom of news; save that my whole winter has been a trial of the deepest discouragement. No light on 'Gubbio' for the stage. No reviews, even; — it's a maimed victim of my publisher's consecutive blunders that delayed it unto Christmas-time almost. 'I know not where to look for comfort.' — Oh, yes, I do, though. I'll go sit on the sheepskin! ! I hear warblings. Send me a descriptive *plan* of your House. And here's my blessing on it, before I look!

With love from us all

Faithfully your friend

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

N. B. It's awful to think of having to live anywhere: except in a State of Mind.

To Anna Branch

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
29 *December*, 1913

DARLING ANNA:

Your Candle — and its most lovely inscription — gave us a rapt hour Christmas Eve. And though no Visible wonder-child knocked on our door, we all felt the blessed confidence of wonders to be — and I know the year will unfold them. You *would* have loved to see the two Babes, spontaneously cover their shut-up eyes with their darling

squeezed-together fingers, in sudden blissful prayers of sheer expectancy. They thought you were so wonderful to *remember* them; and when I told them about your Candle to Pauline Brower, and the little lost child, their delight overflowed, fairly. 'Why,' they said, 'Anna Branch must be a *holy* girl — a very holy one.' 'She *is*,' I said. 'And when a holy person sends a candle with a blessing on it, something lovely *has* to happen.'

We had a dear, adorable Christmas; so little, and quiet, and uncluttered with large-family-party noise.

But Anna dear, how I want to know more of you, and how you are, and where you've been, and all the things the other people never seem to know about you. You girded up my heart for me with your lovely words about the Book. . . . And I can tell you, I needed it. As years go on, the harder I have to struggle to weather this world and the household details, with this still limping and painful body, the less do my old friends bother themselves to utter a word about anything I write: and I've written so little. I haven't had one note from any creature in Cambridge or Boston about the book yet. . . .

You know, therefore, what blessed oil and wine your dear extravagant words were, poured into my wounds. And I wish my eyes would stay open, and my hands fly over the paper, to talk on, and ask and thank, and give again. — (But they won't, to-night!)

January, 1914.

New Year, New Year,
'May I grow and sing.'

I started certain resolves of experiment on New Year's: i.e., 1. To refresh myself, not with the loom but with the plastic arts; to sketch and daub and model and try, and look, and feel.

So I telephoned for certain wherewithals (not reckoning skill, of course, but only faith and hope and charity).

February, 1914. I do seem to have a bit of a start,

too. By dint of scribbling at everything that came into my head — in pursuit — first of all, of some new tunes. Quite true it is that working very long (with a damaged mind) upon a blank verse play, or even upon the four stressed rhyme verse of 'The Wolf,' which I had to watch very carefully, one loses the drift and chance of other rhythms . . . and, indeed, it is impossible to get out of the step of anything so long and absorbing as a play. Now I'm a Jack-of-All-Trades again and a Hunter on the trail of Tunes.'

March, 1914. To Boston I go this day as much to keep my continuity of thought as to search for certain bargains that were there. For now behold . . . I have found a way to steer clear of the utterly deadening routine of discordant neighborly interruptions and destruction of my tent-pegging — which is — on days of tension, to leave the house, and leave it early and keep up this songful isolation in a crowd.

And to lunch in a remote corner looking dumbly on strangers (but human) and hearing any kind of music make comment in its own tongue. That stimulates and restores me, and keeps me in some manner of love for my fellowmen.

March, 1914.

Spring Spring Spring

Is it Victory? My head sings like forty blue jays still, and makes a veil between me and the world. I'm running back and forth between a croup kettle and preparation for dinner to-night. But standing, sitting, or walking, I keep on scribbling at verse and

This morning it begins *turning into Poetry*
Heil dir, Sonne.

To Sophie C. Hart

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
March, 1914

Words are nothing, Sophie, dear friend, in such a case as this.[1] But almost as I say so, I hear *you* saying that they are all that's left!

Why's and Wherefores, though, I'll throw away; for I spent last night first talking them and latterly tossing with them — all along of your misfortune, the heartrending and *superfluous* thing it is. A thousand little things we could do for you at once, I *know*, if we were only there to see them; or if you were only here. I have been in bed a few days, with some more everlasting Grip; — but if I had only known you were across the street —! Nothing chases away petty ills like great ones. — Oh, you poor dear, I *would* have petted you.

I can well imagine that every one's delight and gratulation over your escape (*which indeed I'm not belittling!*) will fill them for some time to come with a degree of cheer and satisfaction hard for the victim to endure. Nothing matches that noble tranquillity with which we suffer the slings and arrows of *other* people's merely material troubles, I know. You are going to need *Petting* for a long while, and I beg you, let *me* do some. Everybody at a distance who loves Wellesley, too, is bound to be filled with tremendous pride at the magnificent behavior of you all; it gives one fearful thought over the witless things that any such household emergency would bring to light. I begin to drill, this day.

Mrs. Baker is wrapped up in the splendid fact that your Notes are saved; indeed, that is splendid, and all you did. But oh, what all those *things*, and books and associations, and fine essences of life itself, meant . . .

Well, I was saying to L. S. M. last night, 'One thing is sure. I don't believe there is a creature there with such a deep will to taste the keenest savor of absolute bare

[1] The burning of College Hall at Wellesley College.

EXPERIENCE, as Sophie Hart. And if it's a cruel and dreadful experience, she will still do it. She will be able to accept the hard Adventure of the thing, with a zest for real life that few people in the world have. — But *it is a cruel, hard mysterious thing, all the same;* and I *wish* I could do something for her this minute.'

Oh, can I?

Yours always

JOSEPHINE

April, 1914. O blessed sense of Work, stay by me now!

This morning I wrote three songs (old to be sure, but tuneful) and sent them to 'Life and Labor' with my love.

Anon, I suddenly saw, heard, followed, and set down fully in scenario with scraps of text a one-act prose (social) piece that looks rather simple and gripping.

This afternoon I wrote out (with revision), to send E. Shippen Green and Harpers, five new child poems — transcriptions all — of Anselt.

And I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

April. Very happy-feeling day — so possessed of Poems and more of them and more and more to say.

Sketch out this morning very fully a great tremendous long Woman Poem for that Φ B K May 6th.

Seeing it is easy; but I hope to *do* it.

April. Lovely letter from Sabatier about 'The Wolf' puts me in high spirits.

Peas are sprouting too!

Quoth daughter, 'We are Poets and Finders; because we find and we Sing.' I fling her glove to Plato and Nietszche.

April, 1914. Trying to produce the Φ B K Poem for next week — with new and unlooked-for Spring fever of dissatisfaction from H——, my maid, threatening to shake up the pillar M—— and everything else that promised a little rest in the summer.

Ye Gods, no wonder the Dumbness of Woman is more striking in the history of Poetry than anything else!

May, 1914. Have a 'call' to write a play (prose), about a Woman this time and one known to history — I think I must do it and I think I'll sign it with a man's name and that foreign.

May, 1914. Alison's birthday song for me. She ran to meet me . . . And I sat upon the stairs in her embrace. Said she: 'Now shall I sing you my song I made for you?' 'Oh, yes,' I said — So she opened her mouth like a robin and sang solemnly —

'Oh, how Good a Mamma can be!
God made their Birthdays!
Tra la là — tra la là
Tra la là!'

July, 1914. Stole my ambrosial Sonny sleeping from his cot last night and L. put him in my bed to sleep beside me for a treat. (I've had him so little with me in the night, and now his celestial babyhood will be passing soon.) And I spent a beatific night, waking every twenty minutes to feel his dimpled shoulders ready to sprout wings and marvelling that a shining creature of such flower-sheathed might and glorious vigor should ever have been born of me. The beauty and strength of our children is surely a mystery to keep us on our knees.

July, 1914. All summer interests suddenly turn to ashes, at news of the execrable Austrian performance, and the threats of seas of blood to drown all humankind of Europe in misery.

August, 1914. There's almost nothing of this world's belongings that one can want in the ghastly face of the War news that comes by this mail. Jaurès assassinated because he preached Peace . . . Germany violating the neutrality of Belgium and Holland, crossing into Luxembourg; already at war with Russia; — England waiting — the whole world paralyzed for the hour. . . .

Germany at war with Belgium also . . . and (as papers related next day) England therefore drawn into declaration of war this evening.

August, 1914. The darling Babies show forth everlasting Beauty to us every hour; else there wouldn't be much comfort in the struggle we are both having to acquire some sense of rest and renewal.

But to see their darling lovely shapes going hand in hand (just before bedtime) against the brooding green earth down a road that seems so long to them: — their simultaneous forefingers pointing out to each other, now the Moon, now the sunset, now a firefly —

To Henrietta Page

EAST BLUE HILL, MAINE
August, 1914

DEAR MRS. PAGE:

Thank you for your welcome letter. I was about to write you an idle length of talk about all manner of pleasant small things here, including our varied and very fickle speculations over possible camping spots — all alluring and offering wide choice of the modern Inconveniences — when every interest of this world fell into ashes suddenly at the overwhelming War-news. Isn't it the most discouraging spectacle you ever heard of? — And what else could any creature really *think* about? Gone is all my pastoral feeling; and I'm very sorry that proper care of our Babes demands that we stay and seem to vegetate here, when we'd both willingly fry in a hotel 30th floor back to have *all* the news, even false news — as soon as it's printed.

One interest, though, doesn't perish, helpless as it feels at present: the Eternal Womanly bringing into this world with anguish — and feeding on love, the human material for all this slaughter; as it was in the beginning, is now, and (until Women possess themselves in their full stature and their earnings for this World) — ever shall be.

It is pain to kiss these Babies good-night, and think of the thousands upon thousands of young fathers who are kissing theirs good-bye, and who must die like insects tomorrow, all because of that hideous old Austrian emperor,

and the maddest self-deceiver of a war-lord that ever played to a gallery of bond-slaves.

My epithets are mixed; not so my feelings. Most of my 'intimate' friends are in Europe, boxed up somewhere. But I feel, with true discerning human feeling, that one may stand a good deal in the shape of discomfort, and much more in the way of danger, for the mighty interest of being near such crisis, and the powerful comfort of telling all about it some day!!

With our most affectionate wishes to you

Yours (untidily)

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

To Anna Branch

EAST BLUE HILL, MAINE, 1914

DEAR ANNA:

Your statement (which I've kept by me) appeals strongly to all the live and potent consciousness that has made me feel Womanhood itself as a flaming power and sovereignty, these years, and all Women gospellers of Life everlasting.

There can be no doubt that it is the day of days for some such proclamation of a common consciousness among all the women of the world who can be made to hear the message. Surely you may count on me, if you will, to be enrolled of that number; and very *proud* should I be to have any hand in spelling out the words we may find to give our sense of *The Word.*

That is perhaps all we can do at present. But it *will* be something. The whole question of Doing, in a large sense, hangs upon the reality of Knowing; — of Knowing Oneself in the spirit; of Woman knowing Herself in her godlike destiny as a creator and a preserver of mankind (to borrow the words we use of God).

The august recognition of what she is, and has been, and ever shall be now with tenfold power and faith, *must* make her a Force for Life, such as she never has been in her own

collective consciousness. And this Consciousness *must* annihilate war — enduring with *I AM*.

Forgive this fearful and crazy way of putting it. The first problem, I think, will be to phrase and define it all in simple words, without self-righteous obscurity or anything shapelessly sentimental.

Above all, let us remember how *constant* and abiding, if isolated and laughed to scorn, has been the voice of the natural Woman, for Life and its glory, for mercy and the things of the Spirit, since ever history began to be written in blood and tears. And History itself *has* treasured those gleams of fragile light, chainless light, inscrutable and deathless light beyond all expectation.

If the dream of Pilate's wife could not stir overmuch her lord and skeptic — our Dream can and shall rule the world yet. For we are beginning to know Mankind as *our product*, in a sense; and what Men do with themselves and each other as our own everlasting and fundamental concern.

Please let me hear, will you not? — of any further plans.

Yours with love

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

September, 1914. To-day, in the radiant high afternoon, we took the Babes and M. for their first journey to the *Domain*. And having deposited them on the prospective house-site, between Two Valleys and a Mount of the Muses, we walked on . . . dipping into the woods now and then and climbing ledges to survey *Our Land* and its forests. And above the road we went, to the upper wild meadows and the trout brook and all the way back to one of our three docks — (and so home).

Three almost perfect open-air theatre places I found . . . We drank from our four springs and worshipped it all.

To Percy MacKaye

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
20 *September*, 1914

DEAR PERCY:

Indeed, I shall be truly glad to have that bubbling word of praise for poor dear Brother Wolf bubble aloud! Follow your instinct absolutely, in the matter of the closing lines. So much depends on the grouping of the poems; and the whimsy was delicious.

We had a sufficiently good summer in that paradise of Maine, even though we couldn't sleep for horror and sickness over the *unspeakable* War.

I do admire your presence of mind (*And* your sonnets), but most of all your power to *use* words when you are stirred to the depths. I simply can't — never, never at the intensest time. Wherefore I have but one stammering poem hid somewhere in a kite-tail string of hieroglyphics upstairs; — and every time I look at it, my heart leaps like a quivering trout, and I sit down suddenly and give it up. . . .

September, 1914. A burst of coolness with high delicious sunshine. Before I ran away to town this morning I gave my daughterling a *Music Lesson*, viz.

We learned which was *Melody* and which was *Harmony* in 'The King of Love my Shepherd is' (and other musics), and we sang it through in fine time, all alone, while Mother played the underneath. Then we walked up and down *in time* exactly while we sang, and discoursed of *Rhythm*.

October, 1914. This day I *Finished* a poem, a poem; — my sole War Poem. It is 'Harvest Moon' (1914), and Lionel likes it. . . . And it came out in the 'Transcript' this evening beautifully spaced.

November, 1914. Wonderful Adventure: — out, unwontedly, of a morning to shop and market in this region, I stop in at Amee's, on the way home from Central Square about noon, and run into none but L. S. M. on his way,

stopping for an envelope, and we greet each other with marvellous joy and surprise! Like a burst of orchestral music — and so suddenly, vividly, that it gave me things to think about all day.

January, 1915. Héjà — up with us — Pegasus Mio! Awake up, my Glory — Awake, lute and harp. I myself will wake right early.

I *did* finish 'Men Have Wings At Last,' and showed it to Lionel.

A neck-and-neck race with the Calendar I'm living — literally one thought, to mind the Babies and be writing those War Poems between the wiles and wails . . . and I knit while I'm telling them stories. So we are truly busy.

February, 1915. . . . And I came walking into our little private Paradise filled with loudly chanting cherubs; and after a little breakfast and much tuneful discourse, I tucked myself up cheerfully in my own Bed, there to rest as much as things will permit for some weeks to come.

Queer how I am felled to the earth every little once in a while with some kind of ballast of bodily weakness, fit to break my heart-of-a-drummer-boy, mad to be doing.

February, 1915. Only the faith of a dormant bulb — or a bear in a frozen tree — could sustain my lamed heart through these thousand-year-stale repetitions of torture, to a Living Spirit.

For the following weeks, same history.

Bed, Bed, Bed.
Waste, Waste, Waste.

March, 1915. Varied only by the approaching certainty of another 'slight operation.'

March, 1915. Neighbors to right of me, neighbors to left of me, all preoccupied with operations too. But I do seem to combine superfluous injuries with riotous aspirations as completely as anybody needs to.

May, 1915. High wave of exaltation (because of Beauty — *via* Euripides and fine weather) sends me fairly skipping (with my cane) this morning of May.

August, 1915. About this time sudden relief . . . started painting. . . . Arthur Dow's blessèd book on Composition has been feeding my subliminal. And 'all of a sudden' my fingers say 'Of *course* I can' to me when my mind stammers 'How I wish . . .'

August, 1915. Sketch a bit close by — 'and still the wonder grows' how it *does* seem instinctive with me, after years and years of almost forgotten repression . . . and it positively *keeps my mind vacant of everything but beauty and hope*, and the childish initiative of it all refreshes me as if I were the daughter of Jairus. Try making little sketch-notes from memory of the Japanese print effect of yesterday's sunset — and find it delightful fun and strengthening, almost physically, for the little cheer and confidence I do so need. And the play spirit we had both fairly wiped out of our days, without knowing better.

August, 1915. Feeling a good deal better nervously, I notice with tremendous thankfulness. It's all this new resource and the moral breeze it is to me, marooned!

Colors for my gasping mind; and fun for fingers; and company, and the lovely time with Babies, painting, too, who needn't be quiet, but sing uninterruptedly their long long songs of the glories of paint-boxes.

To Stark Young

EAST BLUE HILL, MAINE
7 *September*, 1915

DEAR POET!

. . . Now as to your Rrrequest: do you know I haven't a *thing* up here save (and *if* it will do) the accompanying sonnet (Ye war-gods — a *sonnet* in such times as these. — Germans and Imagistes!) — Sonnet, I repeat, which should have come out *months* ago; and maybe you'll think it too Strictly Unneutral in tone.

Send it back without hesitation if you don't want it; for I know it is matter-of-fact and more of a whack than a poem. But I *can't* 'shine' at present. (I could only — that is to say — shine the shoes of the Queen of Belgium, if I

were permitted. No further glory from a crushed glow-worm.) I *had* a very long poem, 'Keeper of the Flame,' which I meant to do over extensively for you (I was Φ B K poet at Tufts College last year, and I liked this thing), but I am still too far below par to be able to work at all, and I *can't* get it ready. May I then send you 'Dominion' for a keepsake, or for you to return in all good faith? Seeing you are become a jovial transient editor??

Blessings on you.

Yours

JOSEPHINE PEABODY M.

December, 1915. And I stay at home and pray the Lord my soul to keep and to let my poor little spiritual earnings this last awful year be somehow multiplied to my inexpressible need, and the further use of all I used to call my Work.

And, indeed, I should not end the year with any but a note of Hope and freshness and expectancy. For, however ignorant it be — I have a *New Resource*. And where save from the Lord Himself have I ever had instruction? It shall all quicken my wits and rest my spirit and put forth newly to the same purpose. And it shall refresh my Dearest too.

Amen, and God be with us.

No: I'll mend that wish. Amen: and may we never be so blind we cannot perceive God with us.

PART III
THE LAST YEARS

PART III

THE LAST YEARS

During the last six years of Josephine Peabody's life, the outside world saw her as an invalid, alternating between long periods of illness and short, generously given, public service. In 1920 she wrote a 'Song of the Pilgrim Women' for the Plymouth Pageant. In 1922 a prose play, 'Portrait of Mrs. W.,' was published, written by great effort of will, during years of suffering. To those near her there were subtle and unexplained changes in her personality. An insidious disease, the hardening of the minute arteries that feed the brain, was making unrecognized headway. An exquisitely cruel result was the sapping of her creative ability in poetry — source of her keenest joy. George Herbert might have been describing her condition when he wrote:

Soul's joy, when thou art gone,
And I alone —
Which cannot be,
Because thou dost abide with me
And I depend on thee —
Yet when thou dost suppresse
The cheerfulnesse
Of thy abode,
And in my powers not stirre abroad,
But leave me to my load;
O, what a damp and shade
Doth me invade!
No stormie night
Can so afflict or so affright
As thy eclipsèd light.

To share was yet left her. Characteristic of her was her last action before the coma in January, 1922, that preceded her death in the following December. She had asked a group of students from a neighboring college to have tea

and talk with her. By firelight and candlelight, in beautiful and gracious surroundings, she had been carrying out the desire of her youth — 'to give heart to a young thing for an uphill charge.'

EBB TIDE

1916–1922

'It gave me a sense of grief and terror to think of leaving belovèd work when I die and of having the work itself fade and die out and come to nothing with endless years, and to think of a possible future world where I could not make a little more music — a world so complete that there would be nothing for me to add to it but a blur, with my precious, all imperfect, hard-wrought gift. To have all this lose its value. It gave me the sharpest sense of desolation, as of an inconsolable human child, homesick in heaven.

'But I saw that this came of laying up your treasure in your art always, and forgetting that the Man himself is the Treasury of all he possesses.'

January 1, 1916.

Fresh hope, new insights and an adventure to follow. What more shall I ask? . . . A long solitary day save for the Babes, and I go on with my thinkings and plannings for the year and the manifold adventure. God speed it with his pet horse Pegasus for me, a lame one!

To Henrietta Page

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
10 *January*, 1916

A happy New Year to you, dearest Mrs. Page. . . .

I wish I knew of anything to 'muse you. I *do* know something that would amuse you, but with a transient mirth only: it's the muffler I began to knit in November, for a soldier somewhere. It has turned into half an enormous kite, and I see nothing to do but ravel it to the bitter beginning. Now if I had been able to get down there and consult you, that wouldn't have happened.

Personally, I *am* feeling immensely gayer this year, because I have managed to peg out a tent over my head and get into my own work again, by doggedly ascending to

my Study on January 1st, and going on with more War poetry that I have in mind to do; because nobody else is writing just these ideas, and I think they ought to be written. And my publishers actually *wish* to put forth a thin paper-covered book of them as early in the Spring as may be. So that I jump for joy (and ignorance) and relieve my mind with planning much strong language. (I've just finished a Zeppelin poem called 'Men Have Wings at Last' that does please me. I hope it may you when you see it.)

This is to tell you we've been thinking of you; and may our feet soon follow our thoughts.

Yours faithfully
JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

To Katharine Lee Bates

CAMBRIDGE, 13 *January*, 1916

MY DEAREST MISS BATES:

... In brief — every little while, I (most ignorantly) 'over-do' with the simplest activities of most human beings; and that just means new strain to my old damage — when even climbing up and down the steps of a train reduces me to a state of great infirmity. Therefore, what little I've tried to do, for Belgians and Suffragists and anything else, has more than used up my wherewithal of mind and body; and my heart has just *ached* the letters to my own dearest friends; because I couldn't keep my eyes open long enough, at the days' end, to write Lionel's home letters for him (as men *never* do, somehow, till there is nobody left alive to receive them).

Since the Whitby outrage, I am hounded by the picture — that yet may be — of those simple and devoted sisters in England suffering just such calamities. And his youngest brother is all alone in South Africa — drilling civilian reservists twice a day, and doing Volunteer police-duty *all* night, once a week (he is a man of business in time of peace, and is managing to do his work still, what there is of it).

I am trying to complete a cycle of war poems (perhaps I should say War and Woman poems) — to publish *very* early in the spring. And when I think I cannot do it — I think of beings like you, and my foolish Body pulls itself together and I build a fire in my study grate and get to work. . . .

To Lionel S. Marks

27 WEST SIXTY-SEVENTH STREET
NEW YORK CITY
Sunday, 16 January

DEAREST:

. . . The luncheon for Masefield turned out to be *entirely delightful; not* large; and as I sat beside Masefield, and with 'old' Jack Yeats on the other side, I had the cream of it all. But the whole gist of everything yesterday was / is / will be what a soul-comforting reality Masefield is. I did not doubt that he would be; but he has kept more of the sensitive and musical fineness about him than one would think it possible in a knock-about world. Altogether exceptional spirituality about his worn-looking eyelids; and a *very* sweet, rich voice, low (I shudder to think of the Hudson), but full-toned and of much color. I am so eager to have you meet him; and he seemed entirely and unwontedly (for English!) eager for some chance of quiet talk; and mentioned it several times.

I suggested that he stop with *us* (regardless!) when he comes on in February. He said he would love to do it. . . .

But I'd certainly love to send him here and there for two days in hired motors for the bliss of housing quietly, and all to ourselves, *the* English poet of this generation, and one of the most shining early Christians you ever saw. . . .

Let's even *plan* to get some human comfort out of Masefield for an hour. His ears are thirsty for some sign of American feeling about the *war;* and he expressed the deepest interest in my poems (about to be) on the war.

(He had asked me what I was writing now, and I told him my idea about 'Harvest Moon.') I'm going to send the three down to his hotel — for he wants (really) to see them very much.

Your own

TONY

January, 1916. I went to town bright and early with a bagful of MSS. and spent a glorious day at the Athenæum. I 'gan separate the J. de V.[1] adventure from the War-poem book and grew more and more fascinated with my brightening plan for 'Harvest Moon.'

Household things and industries: but all the world is brighter to me for the heavenly concentration of mind, these last two days.

January, 1916. Simply *mad* with discovery of the joys and raptures of rapid line studies in charcoal.

May, 1916. Off to Peterborough[2] for a fortnight of retreat. I hope to rest my wits enough to finish that fearful, tuppenny, year-baffled book.

. . . and when I went to sleep I tried most literally to 'rest in the Lord' with all my wearied weight: as if He were the fabric of the earth — and rocks and roofs and beds.

Studio in the Woods: Table, right, 6 foot × 3 to length of casement window, ledge 8 feet, square glass inkstand full of Black Ink — Héjà — the Gods give me joy.

June, 1916. A most ecstatic day. Some sense of *work* at last. . . . And all the whole necklace of hours alone in the heavenly studio . . . getting into the beatific state of mind with finding that good-will alone means something up here, as if you could buy wonders with your Penny! — that makes me feel like a faëry woman or a happy child. Praise the Lord.

[1] Nom de plume.

[2] The McDowell Colony.

To Ferris Greenslet

EAST BLUE HILL, MAINE
22 *July*, 1916

DEAR MR. GREENSLET:

I'm glad to know that you, too, have thought of publishing 'Harvest Moon' outside of the New Poetry Series. When you first spoke of it, so long ago, it seemed exactly the method and the moment — my delusive eagerness to be up-and-doing whatever I *could* do with words made the book seem not only imminent but unquenchable. Now, however, that I can't have the pleasurable onslaught in the fore-front of a series, I think it *would*, from every point of view, be better for my book and its significance, to stand apart — and keep to the sequence of J. P.'s single-file and solitary adventure.

I am extremely eager to keep the word 'peace' far, far away from it; and I have been fussing not a little, to make sure that it's perfectly clear in its intent, and never to be associated with 'pacificism' at all cost, but with the largest point of view regarding War, and with the inevitably feminine point of view. . . .

December, 1916. Looking back and forth out of this still limping body; blessedly alive after so much effort and persecution. *Blessedly* alive and alive to all our blessedness.

January, 1917. Music is the first business of the day in this household, this morning: and every morning . . . this time while Babes do sing 'Bethlehem,' an Idea strikes through J. de V. like a shaft (Ideas being as thick as snowflakes these days of sudden replenishment) . . . The Idea was not music: it was about things made with hands.

January, 1917. . . . Plough Monday.

. . . A new furrow for me all the same — héjà! For delight, for discovery, for health, for lethe, for youth, for freshening, for fun!

I desire to paint and draw every odd waking minute.

To Lionel S. Marks

EAST BLUE HILL, MAINE
10 A.M., 3 *July*, 1917

DEAREST: — P. S.!

. . . And apropos! — Could you kindly add (if you can pack all those books for a porter to carry) 'The Odyssey' (Andrew Lang's translation) which ought to be in one of the upper two long bookshelves behind your desk in my Study (top floor); but *might* have strayed into poetry shelves downstairs. Now is the time for it, as a wonderful fairy tale, told in Homer's own tongue; for the Babes are wild over things Grecian and Shakespearean; and they will know a great deal more when they go back to school. I'd love to have my little Greek Lexicon if I can; that's on the top floor, shelves by the clock. And if it won't do to bring a volume of Encycl. Britt., don't do it. Perhaps article *House* rather than *Architecture* was the one I yearned for. Look and weigh.

(Architecture, Archery, Archangels, arc-light — Axis — Aphises — Air) (House — Howells — Hound — ?)

Anyway: pack up and bring us as much intellectual stimulus as you can, O Noble Dromedary; for that's what I need in any case. . . .

July, 1917. Quite wonderful regeneration of Babies' manners these days through deep-laid plot and Wm. S. I'm resolved that I will go on powerfully with my substructure (that began with Bible-music) before they go back to school. And we'll have together

a) Story first, related.

b) Plays followed and read where intelligible to them.

c) Short bits learned for delight.

Several Wm. S. plays this summer. Likewise, to read itself, 'The Odyssey' in Lang's translation, and we shall play Greeks all over the Domain.

July, 1917. For the present the upbringing of our Babes goes full swing and with an exuberance of Bestness that feels like fullness of Life, indeed. About 6 A.M. these

mornings they come running to my bed, to get in, with 'Holy Books' of all sizes, to see what the Psalms and other authorities have to say by way of Good morning to the Lord, and fine weather and all that. And we revel in grand feelings of skylark. . . . They tease me at supper for the story of the next Wm. S. play. I keep it up like the lector in a Monastery.

We've had (plus reading of much actual text)

'The Tempest,' 'As You Like It,' and 'The Winter's Tale' since June 30th.

To Henrietta Page

EAST BLUE HILL, MAINE
3 *August*, 1917

DEAREST MRS. PAGE:

. . . So far, our only real activity up here, but a very pleasant one, indeed, has been journeying to

OUR LAND

(twenty minutes in the motor-boat; when that's running!) — and wielding small axes on a masking jungle of alder-trees. Heaven knows when we shall build something there; or If; though my heart fairly bleeds to do it now this minute. But we have put up my brown tent-house (9×15) upon a most ravishing and rational house-site; and there we go, whenever the weather is less than tempestuous — to spend the whole day, and cut woods. I wish, I *wish* you could see it. We've said so constantly. For it is really the most beautiful Land that anybody ever *owned*. (Nobody has *owned* Ravello or Capri.)

It has *everything* from cliffs to cranberries; rock pools to *cedar-walks*. We are chopping out a double wind-break of arbor-vitæ trees, that borders one side of our *Italian* garden; and there are quarried pools left, one or two, from the granite work of thirty-five years ago — where fresh green bull-frogs have set up their habitation, and I am going to sink some water-lilies! The place is a treasure and a marvel. It only wants some manner of House, to ask people to, to become a real treasure, I mean. For to my

mind, nothing is a treasure that can't be shared. The House has *got* to come true. And when it's there, you'll *have* to come and visit us. There is *every* kind of celestial joy for all creatures who love the Earth; and you needn't climb at all — or stir your feet from the softest moss, if you don't want to. But you may climb a crag almost as fine as the end of Capri, if you *do* want to! 'timber of fir, and timber of cedar'; white pines and balsam, balsam. Five brown rabbits, so far, and a deer-trail; salt sea; and fresh springs. Only think of it! Blueberries everywhere, to walk on; bay-shrubs and wintergreen and ground-pine, and pyrola, and wild iris — and crowds of wild roses trying to climb on air! *One* thing we mean to plant at one or two points, to see what next; and that's a Silver Moon.

I wish you were here this moment. Then how much wiser *we*'d be, a week from now.

With every best hope for you and your Garden

Always faithfully yours

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

August, 1917. . . . Wake up with some enlightenments of mind, and a more explicit sureness of the one-ness of my suffering will in these present things with The Will: which makes all clear to the Soul. And 'Body must up and after me' — Again, again, again.

To Henrietta Page

Wednesday Evening, November, 1917

What a Garden-full, dearest Mrs. Page! — And oh, what colors, what shapes, what green and perfect foliage! No need to ask *you* how your garden grows.

But we have a deep-seated need to ask how *you* grow; and I cannot find out why you rang the door-bell and ran away; — policemen punish little boys for doing that! (I was in the house, too, on the topmost story, and fearfully disappointed to lose you; yes, in spite of the chrysanthemums.)

An idea: why will you not let your handmaid telephone to me, any promising noontime (i.e. 1 P.M.), when you think of walking abroad; and let me have both the pleasure of anticipation and the satisfaction of catching you in the act?

I see, too late, with shame, that this note has a gushing foreign manner unsuited to New England climate. But forgive it — do: — 'We've been so long Abroad'! ! as the lady says in the farce.

Yours faithfully

JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

November, 1917. New moon — and I feeling a good deal better . . . And there waits my *Canzone*, longer than ever she waited all the years of my tormented youth! With such things to say! I have been a frantic fool with too dull a following of small duties. But now my wits are freshened with some change of outer stimulus, I hope I shall do more wisely. 'Anyhow,' here goes for thirty pounds of clay, this day — to make my *Canzone* more tangible. She shall come close: and closer: till I hear her breathing. So I begin, too, with scribbled attempts at a French orphan's verse and a Grace.

To Margaret Sweeney

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
27 *November*, 1917

DEAREST MARGARET:

Indeed, it has been a keen disappointment to me from day to day that one interruption after another has kept me so far from following up my constant thought with a Written Prescription!

Are you feeling strong enough yet to be using your hands at all? (Not for *knitting* as a recreation!) — These questions might be answered by 'phone and by kindred; but I'm eager to know, to hear, to plead and persuade. — Or have you just been driven to *read* and rest, and read and read again?

I know what it is to be commanded into passivity, but never what it is like to be *spontaneously* passive; and I'm convinced that the rebellious Spirit that cannot, naturally, deal with anything between *sleep* (for its deep rest) and perpetual activity of mind in waking hours — has a desperate problem added to its wonted and unwonted burdens. I'm absolutely certain that the cure of cures is some *new*, enthralling, untried work of hands, with a strain of *creative* zest about it, regardless of inexperience or ignorance; rather the *more* enthralling *because* of the freshness of ignorance. Above all things *drawing*, if you care about it (I'd say painting out of doors, if it was warm and you were stronger); and now — because I've started doing it myself, for a 'rest-cure,' and a mad delight at the same time — modelling; — with wax or Plasticene — for small studies; which you can do, sitting up in bed; and without eye-strain, or the anguish of waiting for a sunny day, or a sitter impaled.

Especially, if ever you wanted to do any of these things, and set it aside from any early-Nortonian idea that it was foolish to experiment; — or if you set it aside because the enthusiasms round you were all of a more obvious *mentality* — not driven and beset by the burning faith that Beauty (of the body) is much more than skin-deep; — *do*, *do*, *do* it; and see how you'll be lifted out of yourself in a half-hour; and how your very brain-cells must re-create themselves and begin to build *you* again. That whimsical insistence of Rossetti's that '*all* men should be artists, certainly,' at some time, was, I believe, the truly *wisest* thing he ever said or saw. And not merely as a statement of high faith in the three dimensions of mind that are ours to occupy (only we so seldom do it) — but as a truth that contains more than we can dream of healing, enlightenment, and the creation of a new self-knowing self. Something like the reverse-process of mediæval meddling with a creature's entity, through his waxen image, brought to infirmity with spells and melting! The first clear triumph in all these things (I've watched it, quite rapt, in about

AT THE AGE OF FORTY-THREE

three years of wild prescribing, now) is the delicious liberation of a harassed mind, with a thing so *objective*. No struggle to be rid of worry; nothing but delight in active contemplation of some beautiful sight; with one's fingers turned into halting and humble praises — earning some precious knowledge for every blunder.

The second strong point, I'm sure, is that *creative zest* which *does*, certainly does, assemble unused forces in us, and builds up a new-ness in mind and body, beyond our imagining until we try. It's inexperience that keeps it all free of anxiety or obligation, in times of illness and depletion. Only two summers ago, I saw a dear woman I know (extremely ill and almost distraught with inescapable money-burdens, too, poor dear) transformed, through paints and paper — the *first* she had ever used, if you'll believe it. Only she took to it in a childlike spirit of humorous delight, never caring that a kindergartener of seven could have outdone her first efforts. After a few days' washing about unfamiliar colors on pale designs of things she saw out the window or down the road, she told me she had her sleep back again; and she had suffered torments of insomnia because the demons of things that threatened had her all night as a rule; and most reasonably. But now, when she woke, she said to herself, 'Would cobalt and ochre make that green, I wonder? I'll try it the first thing . . . the very first thing in the morning. — I *know* it will!'

And as to indoors, and simpler means; there is almost nothing to compare with charcoal or red chalk — and a Holbein drawing to copy. It is wing-y rapture.

And as to Plasticene; and the fun of making a miniature study of somebody's head (from memory or photographs) — like a sketch for a large model; — or copying a photograph of a pet Italian bas-relief upon a small panel; — it is beatitude. *Selah.*

I *mean* all this, most earnestly. And upon the slightest provocation, I will send you avalanches of further advice! I am doing it myself, more actively, at present, to try to

get back any health of mind and body (after incessant overdoing after illness, these seven years, with no kind of amusement save incessant cerebration). And being almost always alone while Mr. Marks spends most of his time in Washington, and trying to get back *his* stamina, poor dear, when he staggers home from his sleepless railroad journeys — I 'up' and joined — of all things, an evening life (Modelling) class at the Copley Society; which finds refuge now, in the ample cellarage of the Old Technology Building! — I couldn't have managed to limp in and out of an evening, a couple of years ago; but Brother Ass is stronger, by this; though nothing to boast of. — But the *bliss*, the sheer bliss of those two hours — twice a week — repairs my bones and replenishes my baffled mind with utter, transcendent sweetness. And all the other people there (men and women) seem to be rapt in a similar serious happiness, regardless of the shapes they toil upon.

What an overpowering letter. If I don't stop here, 'for now,' some Censor will forbid me to write again.

Yours with love and mindfulness
JOSEPHINE PEABODY M.

To Dixie Selden

NEW YORK CITY
(*for the moment!*)
17 *January*, 1918

ANGEL, EVER-BRIGHT-AND-FAIR! ! —

. . . But now, let me tell you, that I carried out my threat of the evening modelling class (though blizzards have cut off many of my solitary jaunts to town, lest I should be unable to get back again). *And*, you'll be glad to know that my instructor thinks me an awfully promising child and wants me to cast the second thing ever I did (an action pose of a little dancer who couldn't hold the pose for more than five seconds at a time). So I hope to show you some toys and sketches when you come to Gloucester! And I am wildly happy while I'm doing it, though it doesn't for a moment dull the longing after color; and

shan't, neither! It's wonderfully usable as a work, however, for solitude and odd moments; because one's heart doesn't crack over a stormy day; and one can be richly amused and learning evenings — sitting by the fire, with a library lamp by the table — doing clay studies from memory or snap-shots; trying one's anatomy for most of it — and correcting next day, from such observations as may be pluckt from the model (with or without! — in the case of the children); — and pictures. I am mad with enthusiasm over *anatomy;* I read it most all night when I'm wakeful. . . .

To Elizabeth Jones

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
31 *January*, 1918

DEAREST ELIZABETH:

. . . I don't think I took time to tell you that the one thing I *have* managed to do (with a wildish, Dionysiac inspiration towards Rest-Cure) is — to plunge head-first, and in complete ignorance, into an *Evening Life Modelling Class* (Boston — Copley Society — two evenings a week — at one dollar and fifty cents a Month! — for members). This Franciscan opportunity struck my wandering mind when I perceived those evenings to be such as L. S. M.'s Washington sojourn swallowed up, earlier in the season. And well knowing that he and doctors and everybody would think it a fearful exertion — 'and to what end?' — I wisely hid the facts for some weeks, but told him that I had provided discreetly for my own diversion if not enlightenment, those evenings, and that in due time, I might or might not see fit to reveal my adventures. (This was late in October.) I've missed an appalling number of the class-meetings (blizzards *scheduled* for Saturdays: — absence in New York; illness — but héjà! — of late they had a devastating model with measles!)

In spite of which things — now do Guess What. Why, I am positively *teacher's pet!* Although no creature so ignorant has stepped into the Class; everybody has at

least studied *drawing* before, most of them designing, and many modelling. But the thing has given me what I most needed, in lieu of rest — delicious, new, absorbing, Objective *Work with hands* — and artistic, of a kind I have *craved* all my life. I come home terribly weary of body, but blissful in mind; and go to sleep numbering bones and muscles with the devotion of a bedesman. And though — — not to discredit my poems and plays — I mean to keep it a very secret lark, I cannot help designing things — some relative — as all one's thinkings are bound to be — to the War. And I have a pet old pseudonym — saved these many years — to use in case any one of the clay sketches is good enough to cast. (My instructor says 'almost Now.')

This is very exciting to me: it brings such a zest of new strength with it. So you shall picture me solacing my lone evenings (I *never* can *write* evenings) with making things of clay by the fire; sketches from snap-shots of Alison Marks when she was from one to five — in celestial (in)-sufficiency of raiment. All small (at home) so far — but what bird's bath-tub adornments those Babies might become! — I must stop here else freight regulations will halt this letter of thanks and love.

Your most grateful

JOSEPHINE

To Margaret Sweeney

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
15 *February*, 1918

DEAR MARGARET:

Just a word more to tell you what a blessed freshness my visit with you gave me; I am almost too much afraid, though, I overstayed all limits of time. I hope not.

One can hardly bear to leave off following a bit further, that beckoning of a single by-path on this inexhaustible way of ways, all wonder and Discovery. But the knowledge that it *is* inexhaustible, and all wonders forever new, should keep me from such rapacious eagerness.

I think it is a real and very precious reinforcement to one's spirit, to have that '*Do you? — So do I!*' for a constant meeting-place. I often say to myself Saint Paul's lovely phrase for it (or some like consciousness) of 'God . . . who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places.'

Thank you truly for admitting me, with the one simplicity, into that companionship. I look forward with keen happiness to seeing you (with my *outer* eyes, too!) very soon again.

Always yours

JOSEPHINE PEABODY M.

March, 1918. . . . All involved in a

New Play

. . . whereof I made copious notes in hieroglyphics and fly-tracks, and wept with joy over the climax: and it must be done whether or no: and it's about M. W. for to be sure, and I'm ready to rush out now and lay hands on all the material.

March, 1918. My teeth fairly in the work in despite of all things. And Life once more a shining adventure, with plenty of causes for young Lochinvars in petticoats.

I. Seven books ahead to write, three of them felt very clearly; no, four of them; three 'in hand'; two well begun.
II. Modelling pranks for rest and recreation.
III. Renewed 'magics' of meddlesomeness with every chance creature who happened by.

March, 1918. Simply obsessed with *idées plastiques* as well as *dramatiques* and *poetiques* these days: a most exhilarating impossibleness. Praise Heaven. The domestic noises of those heavenly twins of mine are incessant and torturing Pandemonium, with things trying to be made known to me in my beleaguered brain. But I do feel human again: and it's ecstasy, when once my ear-drums are uninjured for an hour.

I go on (in the Subway) constructing the *New* play and simultaneously taking visual impressions of all the eyelids and mouth corners before me.

March, 1918. To Boston at noon: thinking upon Opus II for this Spring; — all along, over, behind and underneath Opus I —— and

To the Athenæum: where, after

a) making notes as to the beginning and ending and logical two-part arrangements of Opus II, to my joy,

b) I stop to restate a brief Federal Amendment paragraph to the National Woman's Party and post it to Headquarters.

c) Then resuming bibl. rummaging all over the library for closer views of the matter of Opus I.

d) And get home (with talk by the way with various persons I pick up or pick up me).

e) To rest in bed after early dinner with Babes and read Her 'Vindication of Rights of Women' followed by Boisbandrau's Memory System, etc., and Notes on Art, till I cannot keep my eyes open any longer.

Héjà, this is to live again.

March, 1918. Deep in; — with the very curious exalting and exacting sense of writing two opera quite simultaneously, with poems to come pulling at my sleeve, meanwhile. Now to get them written — if may be.

To Lionel S. Marks

TENNEY FARM, PETERBOROUGH, N.H.
24 *May*, 1918

DEAREST:

. . . I am *ecstatic* with the sparkling silence and the heavenly beauty of the place.[1] Dawn, morning-star, sunrise — all around my shutterless and whitewashed bedroom this morning, filled the place like Music in a shell; lovely as the first Day. And after enjoying it all, I could turn my face away and go to sleep again. There really is nothing as renovating as here. . . .

[1] The McDowell Colony.

June, 1918. My brain fairly bursts these days, and all day long, with the curious incessant plenitude of Ideas that seem to penetrate my skin and scalp all over, literally, like dye-stuff oozing into a submerged round thing. I seem to be aware all the time of things of the nature of revealments . . . about things I wish to know — and I am now and then oppressed by the manyness of them and the keen desire to rest absolutely: to sleep for three days without leaving my bed at all.

June, 1918. This same idea-absorbing process . . . keeps straight on, even when I try to read; and apropos of it: and I cannot get on with writing: but incessantly contrive and construct, analyze and *seem* to perceive, all in a much more visual sense than ever before . . . with ten Good Ideas for ten Good Works in mind (and only one done and that in a faulty stammer). I wish, I *wish* I could finish something now.

To Lilla Cabot Perry

TOWER HILL COTTAGES
EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS
7 *July*, 1918

DEAR MRS. PERRY:

Your nice letter crossed my fair Intention and an envelope already addressed! But the busy administration of small affairs in a small cottage, with two small children along, had postponed even that fruit of leisure; so I can't prove it to you!

I spent a week of the most unmitigated violence in Cambridge, shopping for the whole family's whole summer, sub-letting my two maids' united Incapacity, according to their twenty-minute changes of mind and vocation; packing up clothes to leave and take away, and bestow upon three or four families of childer of assorted sexes and sizes, getting some sewing done (. . . I draw a sevenfold curtain over this euphemism), returning and taking out Library books; — installing a small family at 192 Brattle Street, as *its* nearest approach to rural change and for-

eign travel — and finally, getting away to this place till August 1st.

It is all that Mr. Isaacs said of it, as far as freedom from domestic care goes — and security of excellent food and fun for children count. They count everything for these six weeks; — or *shall*.

But as for beauty of surroundings — or sea-side freshness for those who know the plumey coast of Maine — I was fairly dumb with personal dismay when I came; and soon made up my mind to pull down the window-shades and write, with my back to the wall till the 1st of August and after. The Dorchester flats are just as good to look at; and a glare-y country always drives me mad with depression and eye-strain, till I take my head in, out of it. Don't ever tell Mr. Isaacs — for he doesn't know Maine. . .

So the present service of refreshment and happiness is the complete solitude of this wee family. . . . The grand event of last week was Starting them in Greek! ('Alone I did it!') Tell Mr. T. S. Perry, and also E. A. R. when you see him, that it *is* started — Brother at eight and Alison nine — and, of course, it might have been earlier. But they were so pleased with their first real Lesson (having learned to say the alphabet — and to recognize the letters, with prompting) that I could hardly drive them from the house to fish (with huge tackle after infant minnows).

I drew and pointed out nice things about the more puzzling letters — the portico that π makes (πυλη) and early-Christian tales about X and the little candelabrum that Ψ makes; and with a few story-making words — such as Φιλοσοφία, Χριστος, and Ψυχή — they began to reason, discourse, and ask questions. Then I had with me a fat and lovely (modern) Greek phrase-book that gave me delightful side-lights of contemporary interest and its likeness to Odyssean usage — specially on sea-lingo (Sonny's passion) and animal noises and how to say good-morning to your mother. So we had some peripatetic discourse as well, illustrated with friendly passing animals; and when they learned that a cricket τσιτσιρίρει-s, and that Greeks

know how to spell it, they threw their hats into the air and shouted all the way home.

I was ready for Sonny next day, too, with 'starboard' and 'port,' 'bow and stern'; though I confess I hopped up in the middle of the night to go look up some of these happy thoughts. I think I shall keep the Greek lessons associated entirely with *Out of Doors*, *sea-lingo*, *picnics and poetry*, for the Babes, emphasizing the light and liveness. We'll *never* do it on a rainy dull day. A piece of timely cunning it would be, and a very delightful experiment. But I've been reading Theocritus all day, plus Anthology (plus trots, of course; let me not dissemble), and I've found no end of things which they may be taught to understand and enjoy *in excelsis*, quite now. So I can hardly wait to go on with { hearing / helping } them pronounce, phonetically, and learn at the astounding rate their eager delight in things can bring about.

No, my own work is dubious just at present. I wish I could have my head in the woods and my feet by the sea. I am not up to such incessant moral exertion, no matter how I look; — but I must do it somehow. L. S. M. is off to Washington to-morrow till the end of July. I horribly miss Peterboro. And I hope somebody on earth *does* miss me. The best of happy Fortunes to you with the portrait; and all richly earned rest to your summer. Thank you for writing! Do it some more. And give my warm remembrances to all of yours.

Faithfully

P.S. I am much excited, respecting the Greek, to be dancing on top of the Eliot iniquities in education, with might and main.

To Dixie Selden

TOWER HILL COTTAGES
EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS
10 *July*, 1918

DEAREST DIXIE:

. . . I do appreciate your writing inquiries to Gloucester for us, bootless though it was; — and I'd have saved you that trouble, if I'd had any clew to places presumptively near where you might-have-been-going-to-be, had you been about-to-be-going there! — And I was so glad of the *two* letters. — (Oh, my brand-new paint-box, and my vacant wits and silly hands! When, when? That was going to be my grand Recompense for a perfectly nasty, solitary, despairing, overworked, unrefreshed year, without anything but hard-earned and yet niggardly contributions of small *money* to the war, and saved-crusts. Horrid, horrid — heartrending passivity. Nothing but *saving* on things, and guarding Husband's nervous system, what remains of it.)

16 *July*

In brief: — when I learned that you and Gloucester were out of the question for June or July, I seized upon the only remaining chance of change for me and Babes together and pounced (on faith) upon this wee cottage (sublet to us till August 1st) at Edgartown (Martha's Vineyard), where we reside (sans maid and sans kitchen noise) and have our very good meals at a central dining-room, owned by the owner of said cottages. Lionel pays us two brief visits, and otherwise grinds over research things and war problems in Washington. The place is utterly treeless — and (I do think, between you and me) as utterly unattractive, considered as seashore, as a place *can* be; (but then, my heart is broke for the blessed border of Maine where my Land is — and no dwelling thereto! — And I loathe a glaring sun with no place to cool my wits.) I stay in said cottage all day till P.M. swim-time and managed the Babes till their incessant noise and riot bade fair to destroy me and my next four Plays (one done already in

a first draught and three constructed mostly!) — So I arranged with a young native to take them Away, anywhere on land or sea, from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. — and I have rest to my ear-drums meanwhile. 9–10 A.M. Alison goes off to practise upon a 'piano' for a half-hour, and I oversee that, now and then, and lassoo them for lessons of one thing and another 9.30–10. I've started them, actually — and a delirious delight it is, when they are good and pleased, as they can be — and were these last three days — *on Greek!* And they are so pleased to hear themselves slowly pronouncing aloud wee poems out of the Anthology, and to hear stories of all the story-making words that are so full of the flavor and sound and fragrance of things!

Never till yesterday, have I had the spirit to open my NEW paint-box; for it did seem too bad to spoil its pristine freshness with daubings of a fool. But I started painting a neighbor's child on a nice cigar-box top (Estrella!) — so I have a waiting-list of importunate sitters, desirous to be finished in ten minutes of the rapidly-setting sun.

9.15 P.M.

This babble of myself has postponed the thing most on my mind: viz. — your lovely next War-work scheme. Indeed, Dixie, I am full of sympathy for it, as you know. And if your own doctor advises it, and thinks you should, I think so too. But (on the most strictly *practical* grounds, and being greatly desirous of killing — not birds — but the Enemy — with one stone;) with your splendid new powers of work and the brilliancy of the portrait undertakings, don't you think the actual relief you could bring about, by using your own more highly *specialized* brains and hands at painting, without *over*-working by hours that highly worked body of yours — and being able to *give* a whole ambulance, say, or two or 'em, to the Italians — *would count* more?

I am so doubly miserable over my War-work futility; because my damaged physique forbids me the most ordinary exertions: and my earning power — the little it

ever was, since the gods 'made me Poetical!' — has been all but ruined forever by the war. — I've given away so entirely in War (Relief) remission of royalties on things acted — Benefit readings, autographed copies, free speeches, and poetry — for-nothing, that I don't believe I can ever 'sell' anything again; and I have nothing to give save what I earn. I cannot think, therefore, too gaily of throwing away the chance to earn richly, as *you* should; for generous as you are (with marine sketches for appreciative Friends!) — you are doubtless *not* asked to *bestow* portraits here and there and everywhere. So think long, my dear. — But come East to do your thinking! . . .

To Lionel S. Marks

EDGARTOWN, 18 *July*, 1918

DEAREST:

. . . But the way it[1] draws them out intellectually is perfectly astonishing and very lovely. I may be able to recall Principles to them — convey Veracity (without talk) and cultivate manners with it.

Alison likes, eagerly, to read aloud whole poems in the Anthology; and they are both vastly pleased with the humor and beauty of the English; then, out walking, I tell them words for things, and they like (especially Sonny) to reason about words much alike. (See *War-words*, *strat-ià*, army, *strat-η-yos* general, *stratiótes* soldier — etc., etc.) And '*Sea-words*.' Sonny, after reading aloud (by his own wish) several short poems of long words yesterday, remarked — 'The Greeks don't seem to have many B's in their words, do they?' And as I glanced back on the page I saw that it was remarkably (to him) even so. Naturally, I wouldn't think of mentioning a grammar-expression or anything resembling gr. structure (they've had none in English, save name-word, action-word, and so on). But to know those letters and their sound, and to know what words mean (at the rate — quite simple and in answer to natural

[1] Greek.

query — they are doing) and to divine — without study — the sense and logic of language and its standards as they are already beginning to do, is a splendid thing for the brain as well as the spirit. (I've got so many words in a week and such a new sense myself, that I feel it as a new Resource.)

Sonny looked over my shoulder once, and said, his eye lighting on a line of the grammar, 'What does he mean, by *Roots?*'

I said: 'A *Root* (here) means that words spring from that sound in a language. This is the root half of the word; and lots of other words sprout from it.' He nodded with perfect understanding and interest. (Cf. carrot-culture.) And now *Strat*-words set him meditating *army* matters as a matter of course, and *phil* means that somebody is fond of something (as ships and shoes and sealing wax, and strawberries, and, of course, strings). And *NAU* — has to do with Boats; and nobody but a fool could possibly forget that. . . .

March, 1919. O why was I born with a thousand wings of the Spirit, and a ball and chain on every hand and foot of me?

May, 1919. Mind full of the play all day like a large empty tent. But I won't allow myself to be daunted by the manifest many difficulties and audacities of the thing. . . . It's the hardest thing I ever dreamed of and the deepest.

Torrington, May, 1919. Wonderful mornings whether with sleep or waking. The rest to my ears and sanctuary to my spirit of no-noise, no-care, no hostile ugliness at the gate — but bewildering far-off-ness and featurelessness of quiet. . . . I feel diaphanous of body and sweetly barefoot within my shoes or out of them, and so tranced in listening to inner things that I am truly almost doubtful as I spread myself out to sleep, whether I am going to sleep, or dying. Any security of rest at all is so like Nirvana.

To Lionel S. Marks

TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT
Sunday, 11th May, 1919

DEAREST:

. . . I shall come home *infinitely* benefited — and ready to deal with the mundane errands, and an undivided mind, for a fortnight, against the fine promise of a Peterborough sojourn (another fortnight after that); and thus a happy return to human life again.

This ample and perfect quiet and seclusion each morning, you see, has given me an average of four hours, at least, from the top of the Morning — for perfect peace and thought; and I have used it completely. For wonderful repairs from one's 'subliminal mind' it has almost amounted to a trance, I needed it so sorely. I should almost be afraid to let go any longer, so far from you. For I hardly feel as if I were the same body; I am so diaphanous with rest and more knowledge. So tremendously far from strain that going to sleep feels like dying. (Boots are for ballast.) . . . I have stored up more and more Maine researches for us children. Their life here is full of all the romance possible to *farm*-life. But oh, the spice and buccaneering flavor of it in Maine! . . .

To Henrietta Page

4 *September*, 1919

. . . But to my tidings (of great joy). Our modest beginning is One little Study-lodge (one room 14 × 20 feet, with a chimney and fireplace, one long casement light about 9 feet long — with a deep overhang to the eves; two smaller windows opposite, and a Dutch doorway. Founded upon a rock; but shingle construction; walls to be stained deep and mellow; floor likewise; outside likewise; roof shingles to be stained warm rosy terra-cotta, like Italian tiles. Fireplace faced with the granite of the place. (I look about my coast and the old quarry grout-piles daily, for the mantel-piece!)

Our long road (two thirds of a mile long) is being mended, all summer, in various ways, and now permits a FORD to traverse its bumpity way to the very shore, with interludes of exquisite grassiness; and our DOCK, behind our own wee Island, is thoroughly repaired. I have wrung as much joy out of it all as Lionel's perturbing fatigue and depression would permit; and the baffling weather. And it is certainly an estate beyond all dreams. The chimney once there, I shall feel it is true Home. For I can camp about — and house a weary Guest there, and it will be heaven to go on, with a tent or two, till we can cover a larger space on the house-site proper. Within this fortnight, too, we have acquired neighbors (and that reasonably adds to husband's cheer). For they are people of mind (plus MEANS to build as they choose); withal they had the enthusiasm to come in a canoe with a tent, and hang their saucepans and hats on the boughs of their trees, the day after they bought the exquisite adjoining property, at L.'s own urgent instigation! And already we have improved each other's boundaries with an exchange of a hundred more feet, north roadway for south shore-bit, to our mutual joy and content. So it will all come true. I *wish* you could see it.

Do you like my name for it all? — '*Two Valleys*.' One — did I write — is dedicated to Saint Michael and one to Gabriel. Each has a brook — never large, but yet alive, and even when the drought has taken them from the visible hillside, they emerge and bubble audibly before they run into the sea.

You know what questions you'll have to answer about naturalizing other irises, and water-cresses, and the like. Of the cliffs and the quarries and the high pools and high places I may not tell, without risking 'author's cramp.' But it is all incredibly beautiful, and so full of variety that it seems more an Allegory than a piece of nature — like a symbolic design by W^m^ Blake.

When I go out a-chopping (small limbs or alder-brush) I feel I have a choir invisible (but entirely audible) of Angels with hatchets and hunting-knives — as boister-

ous as harvesters (Italian harvesters) and full of celestial mirth.

The site of our dear Beginning — I forgot to say — we made, wisely, I think, not among our remotest sanctuary places, but in a bright, accessible, and visible spot close to the shore, and dock and tiny harborage — in a birch-glade disclosed by our own cutting out of a jungle of alder-thickets. So we have the sparkle and color of the blue vista down the bay, and the blue outlines of Mt. Desert, and our right wing of Neighbor's lovely cliff ('Rocks by Hokusai') and our own exquisite deep cove, now *all* our own; blue to green water at high-tide, and saffron sea-weed and peach and copper-hued rocks at low tide; and sometimes even a blue heron flying from the 'deep dark woods.'

At least I hope to carry back with me this heavenly reality, made real by L.'s participation in the joy of it — *and* the scarce-decipherable scribbles of the first draught of the next play, which goes into *one* pocket of my khaki gardening apron, with plumb-bob and Druse knife in the other.

To Anna Branch

29 *October*, 1919

. . . To E. A. R. also, of late, I had the pleasure of writing that at last Lionel and I have succeeded in putting up a wee study-cell (14 × 20 feet) with a Chimney, on our adorable paradise-land on the coast of Maine; and with my study-tent there, too (and house-plant and Babes domesticated as usual in the native house we hire in East Blue Hill village hard by). I don't see why I can't have the felicity of a visitor or two *next summer* to try what Paradise is now and forever will be. Anna is hereby requested to mark off on *her* Calendar, a fortnight *anyhow*, for refuge with me, Upon that Land — sometime between early July and September, 1920; and she shall have nothing but Beauty to oppress her, withal. And robins — not ravens — hermit-thrushes, and freckled small boys, and Alison and Fra Leo shall bring her food.

No more to-day! You see how the flood-gates of speech are opened.

Your KHAYYÁM

P.S. Our Land I call 'Two Valleys'; which says nothing at all of the Heights, the Cliffs, the old quarries, the High Pools, the open-air theatre, the water-brooks.

P.S. And one valley is Saint Michael's; and one belongs to Gabriel. And the angels fairly *shout* in all the trees.

To Henrietta Page

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
January, 1920

DEAREST MRS. PAGE:

A happier New Year to you! And may I see you soon.

The mournful expanse of ice and snow that stretches before me, with drifts up against the music-room windows, does not promise me speedy visitors, however (with safety to themselves); so I must hasten at least to let *you* know that we are, most of us, feeling very well, and gayer than for years and years. And I have plunged into 1920 with such vigor and verve that I almost feel as if wind and tide were with me, for once, and my two Plays I'm trying to write — one with each hand. I must say that 9° below does freeze all lyric and most dramatic process. But then, the virtuous wrath that warms me when my Kitchen Centurion objects to giving our postman hot coffee, that's enough to fire an Ode (on Most Cooks).

I took my Cane in one hand this day, and my husband in the other, and thus waddled securely to the cars, and thence to the Fogg Museum where there is the most wonderful collection of W^m^ Blake that ever was gathered together.

I *pray* you, see it, if you have not already. It is certainly like touching the very flame and feather of genius; wonderful, wonderful. I do think the inspired line-harmonies of

the Book of *Job* designs are beyond all analysis or definition. The bowed necks of the three untroubled grazing sheep (in the first design for the burst of evil tidings upon Job) remain in my memory with as awesome a tranquillity — and as sovran — as the sentence, 'He that keepeth Israel slumbers not nor sleeps'; whatever on earth that may mean.

I have to dash on to New York for a Committee the 23rd and 24th this week (but it's a nice and Interesting Committee, else husband would tie me hand and foot). And I pray the earth to thaw meanwhile . . .

To Harriet Moody

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, 1920

DEAREST HARRIET:

'Think me not unkind and rude,' that I may not join even a choir invisible of the piquant criticism you suggest; — it would surely be entertaining in a high degree to hear — and for those who have more breath left in them these days for un-essential words, jolly to do! —

But 'tis *not* for your Josephine; a paragraph of prose has ever been for me like chewing sand. And I have spent such a dire year of ever-postponed rest — and twice-postponed Volume which I simply *cannot* get the vigor to finish, that I look upon shining words at all, as treasure for a pearl-diver, and a thing no exhausted poet can or ought to promise.

All around you, out there, the poets seem to find exuberant pleasure in estimating each other; — but it is a thing I never *could* do — save in closest comradely talk, one at a time — and that's no estimate. Also even intimate criticism pick-axed out of me always afflicts me more or less; for I have an idiosyncratic and imbecile dread of failing any fellow-worker, with seeming to dogmatize about things he loves and I don't; — for his work is always his, to me, and no obvious reason in the world why

I should or should not like the method, if I DON'T OR DO.

'*Live and let live!*' is my slogan, from first to last, artistically; and I marvel utterly at the inability of most people to do it, in this land of the Free!

It's as puzzling as the Socialist party to which we'd all yearn to belong, if they didn't chase us with manacles and rods in pickle.

Do let me know where and when you see New York in January. For I have to be there between the 18th and the 21st. But for all other times that I can see ahead, I am yearning for a deep jungle and a little Silence to heal my mind.

Yours ever devotedly

JOSEPHINE PEABODY M.

P.S. I hope you won't gather from this screed that I'm capricious about it. I have *always* been, about the values of very frequent contemporary criticism. But for me this year, it's a question of being immensely spent and overwrought for lack of rest and silence these past four years.

I *must* go back to my own work.

October, 1920. Oh, but it has been the hardest struggle to get to the conscious working point with this three-year-old scrawl of my M—— play, and the isolation and the problems and the sense of wornness of body!

But only since yesterday noon when the music-motif found its right place in that plan, I feel blind and shaken as though through the worst fight: but

I have my Play around me to live in.

I will try to rest in it to-day.

January, 1921. I pray the Lord to have mercy on long sufferance and a thousand efforts full of hope: and as the prayer used to be, at least three times a day, 'to grow and sing'!

January, 1921. Get upstairs to the study which (as usual with my great preparations) I dust and clear up and bask in the Cartoon sense of the next things to do.

That's the trouble. I can see, feel, plan it all, like a master with that sense. But that doesn't Do it. The wretched lame walking with words.

March, 1921. Most awful blues and onslaught of such Sameness as almost dizzies my brain and faith, with tensity of work . . . It is too awful to be so tempted to Fear — I will at once work on Act First.

March, 1921. And here I come to the End of my M. Play, in the third effort at a third draught with Newness written in stitches and patches. And here comes a bottle of Red Ink for transfusion into my sluggish veins — all next week.

To Anna Branch

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
18 *March*, 1921

Blessings on you,

dearest Anna!

And high time it is, even if it were

EASTER
27th

which it is now. — (And I can't remember what I was going to write; but I won't try, for fear of the next dire interruption. So, again — blessings on you. For that I cannot say or think too often, I am sure; and I *think* it often indeed!)

I. You have done simple wonders with the 'Unbound Anthology.' We all see not a flaw in it; and I'm altogether proud to be so represented. I would have written at Christmas time, not just my thanks, but a letter to you, for that season; only I was stricken, *exactly* then, and with alarming suddenness with a thing called a *streptococcus* throat which it took two days — laboratories being closed for the holidays — to differentiate from diphtheria; and it flattened me into a heavy, helpless (but perfectly happy) Thing, for some time. Then, surprise of the season, my sis-

ter Marion was visiting us, after eight years in Italy; and my every upright moment was a busy one. . . . She is visiting elsewhere, now; but I expect her to spend the month with me before she returns to Italy — the 12th of May.

II. Between you and me and our poor little pocketbooks, I have had no hope of getting to New York for any purpose; for I spent the last penny that I had on earth last September, in a desperate though humble little effort to settle my poor old-soldier uncle's affairs. He died, at a great age — and somewhat in debt; and I couldn't bear to have him owing anything — just of will as he was, and striving all his life. So I paid it; and I've been such a downhearted Uncheerful giver! — It does seem to me that we shall never — never — *never* — LIVE upon that Land. — Oh, well — change the subject.

I had a most *lovely* afternoon and evening of late, with Mr. Markham, whose host and hostess invited *me* to dine with *him* at their brother's country house. We all motored to said house together, and showed Salem and the House of the Seven Gables to Mr. Markham, who was in one of his happiest veins. And we talked of *you;* without difference or disagreement! — Did you feel feathers putting out from your shoulders? (It was the 17th of March, your birthday eve. And we blessed you wonderfully, between us, though we had forgotten the birthday in talking about you.)

Apropos of *you*, by the way, *are you writing*, yourself?

Your own

JOSEPHINE

To Lionel Peabody Marks

81 EAST ELM STREET, CHICAGO
7 *April* (A.M.), 1921

DARLING SONNY:

Your mother is *very* grateful for your fine letter about walking through Waverley; — and I could hardly wait for the birds' nests, if I were not so excited every day, with the sense of new and Friendly people I meet — and how it

is all something like a Symphony concert. *I* feel as if *I* were tuning them up, before it *Begins*, I am in such a *good humor;* and people all really *need* to love each other so much more than they seem to, on top. But they are all of *one mind*, you see, about being very, very nice to a guest from the East; all of them, male and female, old and young, and some of them disliking each other. And as a Guest is pleased and interested and full of *on-and-on-ness* (like sailing a Boat) — we all get in high time together; so that the days become like a string of Holidays. You'll know how it must feel.

I keep stopping this writing, to read poems that Agnes runs upstairs to copy down for me to read; — for we are planning her next Book together; and it is going to be a Beauty; much the best; so, though she has been ill-ish a long time, she is looking stronger; and we are both feeling so much cheered.

Bless you, my darling. Your letter was *splendid.*

Your own

MOTHER

April, 1921. Wm. S. His birthday again and what is it delays me now to finish my M. W. play, vowed last year? What but

Inhibitions

Go to, go to! Swear a new swear, this noon. And keep it.

September, 1921. I stayed at home two days, wrestling with my used-up feelings, and the desolating sense of wicked Fear that is a new Demon to me.

To S. E. Marks and Katie Marks

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
25 *October*, 1921

DEAR PATER, AND DEAR KATIE!

. . . We are all very good, early and prompt, so far, this year. And indeed, we *must* keep it up, to get to office and

school, in time. We sit down at 7.30 A.M. and the Children are off at 8 o'clock; Lionel a few minutes after. Mamma hangs about, to see about market-orders and kitchen-wants and the postman; — but very comfortably this year, because we have a nice maid (I say it, touching wood with both hands, and a pious prayer in my heart! — for she Can't - Make - up - Her - Mind - *Just* - Yet - Whether-She - Will - or - Won't - Marry - an - Urgent - Widower-with a winning Baby!).

But — for Now, *just* Now — we are in this state of sweet-but-shaky Peace, like a jellified dish; — good to eat; but trembly. . . .

To Anna Branch

192 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
6 October, 1921

And here is to thank you, dearest Anna, in the next breath, for your dear and much-needed letter! It's very date — October 4th — Saint Francis' Day — makes it as straight an answer to my prayers as I felt it to be, when I read it first. So up to my Study I climb, on stronger legs; — and instead of setting about the (almost) impossible *Preface* to my 1000-year-hindered Play (and a feeble one, too, I'm afraid) about Mary Wollstonecraft — I sit down to re-read your letter; and to reflect that I believe you are feeling as much beset and torn from your Work as I from mine; and to reach out both Hands to you — as you do to me in your letter; and to say

Bless you and Thank you, dearest Anna! Let us say 'Talitha Cumi' to each other, thinking who said it. And let us two, at least, resolve always to follow such blessed impulses and to write those blessed '*unnecessary*' Letters; whatever we do to the expected!

The letter that was hovering all summer in *my* mind (to you) — and that was never written — was an invitation to you to come and visit me in my small (tight — neat — hideous — hired) house (in Maine) and my glo-

rious, incredibly large Land and Sea one, and the reason that clipped all this, and the whole summer, into a stressful and confused dream was briefly: our one Maid, very young and (with us) very happy, who had been beside herself with eagerness to go, was stricken with severest illness on the fifth day after our arrival there — the end of June; — had to be taken to a little private hospital five or six miles away; and after being operated on, and suffering all manners of fever and ups and downs for more than two weeks, she *died*, of a terribly acute Bright's disease; and was buried there; and L. and I had to be as responsible as parents; and break all this as fresh news to her poor ignorant far-off people; with a great many other painful complications. That actually used up half the summer; and prevented *me* from doing any other thing. Then, when I began to think of recovering some refreshment from the season (for the Out-of-doors was always wonderful, and a marvellous anodyne for what one felt (*in-doors*) to be unforgettable and full of physical horrors), I had a struggle with bodily pain (both day and night) that cost me sore to take cheerfully (for L. and children) and that lasted six weeks — or All the Rest of the Time; so that for the first occasion in six years, I was resigned to our home-coming; — and sent for my blessed dear Doctor, as soon as we saw Cambridge; to have him agree that it was all overtaxed Nerves, and *not* imminent Destruction! . . .

Your words of your house-Ell and the new-nesses for your mother to live in; and the Lights — convey all the quickening pleasures. How I'd like to see it! But my present is only a desperate hand-to-hand with alien, bristling things; and the everlasting Need of the people in this world I value most is fairly heartrending. *Why* is it? — But it so persists, I am filled with awe towards my own pain in it; confident that God will show us presently a something Wonderful.

Thank you, *so much*, very-present-one, for your delightful letter.

Your

JOSEPHINE

To Meta Sachs

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE, 1921

DEAREST MRS. SACHS:

I have just come home from New York to find your lovely note with its message of '*thanks*,' so wholly unreasonable and overflowing! That wonderful etching — which Mr. Marks knows, is still in store for my eyes. But let me thank *you* for the sweetest impulse and insight that set you doing such a rash and undeserved thing as to give us this united gift and keepsake together. I deprecate the extravagance; but Not the impulse. That is a heart-warming treasure to us both; too lovely of you. And I can't tell you how it pleases me to *have* such a keepsake, of our vision of Art and Science (that men are always so grotesquely putting asunder) and of you-and-your-husband and me-and-*my*-husband friends all together, and also in our hopes for one another's work. This sounds very sentimental, maybe, and flighty. But timely symbols mean acutely much to me; and this gives me a wave of delight.

My truest thanks to you for all it is and means. *Never* speak of thanks for anything I said (or exhorted!) that good afternoon of fireside talk. It was a cordial pleasure; and such an hour of close fellowship as I very seldom gather in, for all my wistfulness.

I've searched my wits these few days to think of some companionable book (beside that very suggestive one by Jane Harrison which I think you had already bought); but I cannot at the moment recall a single one: only infinite browsings among unwieldy works. Perhaps a steamer-chair, and a very *small* enveloped writing block and pencil, are best for sea-voyages, after all. Ideas strike one from such unexpected quarters. 'It thunders on the left'; . . . and then things happen.

But I *do* mean to haunt your day-dreams with an inescapable word and summons. *Do it.* Don't be lowly. The times *ought* to exact of every woman the hourly tribute of her experience and insight and lovingkindness towards

the human race — in its bloom as in its bud. And I'm sure there will be immediate and *practical* uses for every sprout and leaflet of that hope and healing, somewhere. I've had four days of continuous adventure (with people and thoughts) in New York; and I'm almost distraught with suspense to know if some of these elements may not be in lively motion within a few weeks (of course they are now, mightily); but I mean to that near view of my own eye-of-the-caterpillar. Be sure I'll tell you all I know of immediate chances: if you'll let me have your address. And I shall long to send you a hortatory bulletin now and then. Yes, do tell me where to address you.

May the blessed Children enjoy every moment of the year themselves, and give you a blessed Mother's (most unusual) leave to hear what you are thinking! And give our united happy wishes and hopes to Mr. Sachs, for his own harvest of splendid work and rest. It is so good to see you off for such a sojourn; and it will be doubly good to see you come back some day, bringing your sheaves with you! Let me know what I can do to help.

With my true love and happy thanks
Yours always
JOSEPHINE PEABODY MARKS

December, 1921. The happiest Christmas Eve for at least twelve years; with as much as twenty minutes of sheer blissful rest and shiningness.

And this was the really happiest and fullest Christmas Day in many, many years. Alison thought to bring of her Birds' Nests downstairs to put on the Christmas Tree.

December 31, 1921. Now they're gone to bed, and I've lighted some lovely candles that stand shining on us, like the blessèd ones.

My Mother and Lionel's Mother and my Father and Lionel's Father — and Carroll, and Emma's Mother, and Lillian; and Grace; and my sister Florence, and Lionel's sister Lizzie, and Margaret Sweeney, and five others, both

living and dead. It gives me such delight that I hope now to do it always.

Lastly there are two I lighted for L. and for me and for our *dedicated year to come.*

To Dixie Selden

192 BRATTLE STREET,
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
12 *January*, 1922

DARLING DIXIE:

It was good to have your greeting and Wishes; I swallowed them voraciously, though what you mean by such nonsense as Our being Good to you, I can't imagine. With a few days' *warning* before your next visit in these clammy regions, I could collect a few intelligent and attractive folks who would be prancing to meet you; and we could dine cosily, and not have to lean unto one another, to hear, guarding an ear apiece with a hand apiece, against the crushing Noise-all-around.

Do write to me shortly — I mean 'shortly' of time; longly on paper!

For I have kept my word (about the Copley Society basement Mornings 'Painting' or Daubing 'Class';— 'Class' sans Instruction or criticism!) And I have had a heavenly-blissful time, for the nine mornings I have managed to arrive there; and I am desperate with excitement over wondering what *you* would tell me to do about this or that; and I rest my back evenings, lying down and reading two or three books at a time, about anybody who ever Painted.

I have averaged two daubings at a head (about four hours, that is, instead of your two that you advised me;) but now I am going to work more intensely and directly and trying for what I learned through my fully digested mistakes. (If ONLY you were Here!)

I've made very good *Likenesses* (*painted* frantically, of course) of all the models so far; and sketched a lightning (twenty minutes) little head of Husband (pastel crayons)

which impresses him; and I am doing a bas-relief (in a lunette, about 10 × 5½ inches) of a most lovely (and plastique) elderly woman of Norway, who died on Christmas Eve; — the mother of my best school-friend.

But words won't avail to relate the tenth of my rapturous excitement and acute curiosity about everything that *sticks*.

This A.M. I plunged a bodkin through my every member, and pinned myself to a leather seat beside the fireplace; and having Applied myself to the year-old task of a *Preface* for my play (February–March) 'Portrait of Mrs. W.,' I hauled and kicked and pushed it, from 9.30 to 11.30 — and then felt so terribly Good and Innocent and Head-Achey, and broken-down, that I decided to *Call* it Done and type-write it to-morrow; and to treat myself Now to a word with *you*.

Write me how happy you are in your *wonderful Studio;* and if you are *not* feeling well, dear, *write me that.* You are, temperamentally, so abounding, that you *must* be a difficult one for You to take care of.

I wish I could save you the trouble of writing, by dropping in on you; but that's a far Drop and no mistake.

Just a word. Love and blessings from *all* of us. The wild-looking Florentine belt-pin, or whatever it is, shouted 'Dixie!' to me, so I reached out and took it, feeling that it would amuse you to fasten something with.

Bless you, my Dear.

JOSEPHINE PEABODY M.

To Rachel and Ralph Barton Perry

192 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE
1 *June*, 1922

DARLING RACHEL, DEAREST RALPH:

And would you Ever believe that this is positively the first day I could have written to you more than a sentence which couldn't deserve to be posted? — And me so mindful of the two of you, yes, ever since several *months*

ago; but weaker than anything; and with a mind (happily) open to *nothing* but what was (and is) exactly in front of its front-wise gaze; — and forbidden even to think, till the second half of summer in East Blue Hill!

Your devoted L. S. M. (upon whom I have rested solely — for many weeks unconsciously, and even now, for thinking, and for getting upstairs at night, and for Almost Everything) has actually *besought* me, for the last five days, to spend the day-middle *writing to you*. I have had to put off, because my mind would Shut Up in that middle of the day; and I couldn't tell how the time had gone.

So you shall forgive me, that the winter has gone; and I sit up on our lower porch now; walking out, with my cane, or a child, or L. S. M., twice a day for a little while; and *no one*, not even Dr. Stevens, not even I, can tell now whether it's days or weeks before I am Myself (outside); but since my birthday (30 May — Jeanne d'Arc — Pope — and me) I am feeling quite ultra-gorgeous. So be patient; and I'll tell you the wonderfullest tale ever. (Because it is the only thing I know — since the *23rd of January, 1922*.) So here let me begin.

On that morning, Rachel dear, I have — surrounded with hieroglyphic expression of joy and (dying) victory — after several years — in my Journal Book

'I set to work by the fire and Return (last proofs) III and IV and Whole Play of Mary, 12.55 A.M!'

'L. S. M.'s six books arrived at his office this A.M. His lectures closed for the mid-years.'

I sent my blessed Sonny out to post my corrected stuff before lunch; and gave myself up to joy and gladness; and thinking that I would just LISTEN for the next thing on my mind (thinking, bless you, but dimly, of '*Augustine*,' that play, waiting, tied up, in a drawer; but sensible of a long waiting space between me and It; — and a space for Whatever was in the Future).

At five that evening came a quite delightful class from Tufts College (six youths and six girls from Professor Gilmer) to take tea and talk about It; — wide eyes and

serious minds; and we talked and had a fine time. Then appeared L. S. M. and, says he, 'I'll be back at nine surely. Have a good time,' and he departed. All merry with the babes. That's all I know. Children say that I telephoned to Dr. Stevens to say I felt ill and iller; and that he told me to take a hot bath and that he'd see me in the morning if I felt no better.

But all my memory stops with saying *Au Revoir* to L. S. M., who returned promptly at nine P.M. and found a strictly Unconscious Wife tucked up in her bed; who spoke not nor opened her eyes, but sobbed heartrendingly with her hands over her eyes and seemed to be in positive agony without a word for any one. He sent for Dr. Darling and a night nurse; and the next A.M. came Stevens with a day nurse; and thereafter, *not one word from J. P. P. for thirteen days*. Dr. Stevens, with much mournfulness breaking the news to L. S. M. in five days that if they could think of nothing to do (besides forcible feeding) I must die, pretty shortly. (Symptoms queerest yet; but *major* symptoms those of uræmic poisoning, very sudden.) Dr. S. himself pretty hopelessly tried filling me up with a salt-water solution and, the very next day, that seemed to say that it had turned the scales and that I *would* get well. But to L. S. M, or any one, I spoke not, all the remaining weeks.

Well — forget that painful (to L. S. M!) history; and open your eyes with me — in the middle of the day *February 4*, when I opened them, upon a frame of lightishness about 9 inches × 7 (quite literally) out of a sense of tremendous *bliss* (*no pain*, no fever, no recollection but asking some one to send me L. S. M. quickly, for I was *bursting* with a sense of something *Wonderful to Tell;* he was there with marvellous speed; and I began to try to tell him of the positive Ache of beauty and delight and high authority; but my name-box was all mixed up. He seemed to understand everything; and said he, presently, 'Do you know you have been very ill for two weeks?' And that utterly amazed me. 'Why, no; didn't I just go to sleep last night?' said I. Then I saw the night-nurse, who disap-

peared. And the Children came in, and folded up into each other, like autumn leaves; and into me; and disappeared too. Then I tried to tell L. S. M. of the wonderful blisses and beauties; and they folded up too. — So it was, for *two countable weeks* of widening bliss of mind at mid-day (when I would wake up, and my mind widen out a bit — day by day; always my own mind; but oh, my dears, you can't imagine the timeless-ness of it. I couldn't move my head enough to see out of my window; and when I was able to move down the hall and look out, I couldn't make my own room seem like my own room, till the beginning (almost) of *May*. The first recognizable sights were sights of *Spring*. . . .

And now I've written all I can; but the Inside Wonder I shall have to tell you of when we meet. For it is still with me; and it says '*Not one word of discouragement.* It is All happy; and you will understand in a very short while. What are *three* — even four weeks — to count in six months of such Rest and Newness? It is your own ridiculous sense of Time; concerning which no one can tell you anything. Do not trust your own little sense of time; which, in the end, is always wrong and troublesome. *Trust the sense you woke up with.*'

And so I do. And I am tremendously happy.

Like a pen-wiper, with its bouffant skirts just spreading around shiningly; and its (mostly) empty mind, too, outspread, ready to catch all shiningness.

L. S. M. expects to take me (on the six o'clock boat!) to Maine, the 23rd of June, bless him. And we all look forward to a wonderful summer (All thinking forbidden till August, anyhow. — But *Paints*, no!)

Now, my dears, will you forgive these particulars? Nobody else has them — from me; and they are all I had to tell, or to remember. Blessings on you, dearest Rachel, for your postcards and *I pray you, send me more!*

Your own

JOSEPHINE

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Parentage

Father: Charles Kilham Peabody, b. Aug. 18, 1834, at Wenham, Massachusetts, second son of Francis Peabody, of Danvers and Wenham, and of Hannah Kilham Preston, of Salem, Massachusetts.

Mother: Susan Josephine Morrill, b. March 5, 1849, at Boston, daughter of Charles A. Morrill, of Boston, and of Susan Simonds Jackson.

Their Children:

Marion Louise Peabody, b. Brooklyn, New York, April 17, 1869. Josephine Preston Peabody, b. Brooklyn, New York, May 30, 1874. Florence, b. 1878, died 1882.

1884. Father died. Family moved to Dorchester, Massachusetts, and lived with mother's mother. Schooling at local grammar school.

1887–8. Started extensive writing; including a novel, a comedy, a periodical magazine, and about twenty poems, of which seven were published by magazines, including 'The Woman's Journal,' and 'Wide Awake.'

1889. Started at Girl's Latin School, Boston. Wrote more novels and plays and thirty-two poems, of which fourteen were published.

1890. Wrote three stories and twenty-two poems, of which seven were published.

1891. Wrote stories and twenty-three poems, of which eleven were published.

1892. Left Girl's Latin School before graduation, health not permitting completion of course.

Wrote and published some short stories, and also wrote twenty poems, of which seven were published.

1893. Wrote twenty-eight poems, of which thirteen were published.

1894. In Florida during the first months of the year. Wrote story, comedietta, and twenty-five poems, of which ten were published in the 'Atlantic Monthly,' 'Scribner's,' 'The Chap-Book,' and 'The Independent.' Entered Radcliffe College in the fall as a Special Student.

1895. Wrote twenty-three poems, of which thirteen were published.

1896. Left Radcliffe College in June — after two years of work.

Wrote eleven poems, of which nine were published.

1897. Wrote 'Old Greek Folk Stories,' intended originally as an

appendix to Hawthorne's story books, but published by Houghton, Mifflin & Company in the Riverside Literature Series. Wrote a story, some reviews, and eight poems (four published).

1898. Publication of 'The Wayfarers,' a book of verse, published by Copeland & Day. Twenty-three poems written (twelve published).

1899. Wrote a one-act poetry play and twenty-one poems. Moved to 36 Linnæan Street, Cambridge.

1900. Publication of 'Fortune and Men's Eyes,' new poems with a play, by Small, Maynard & Company.

Wrote twenty-four poems. Several poems were included in Stedman's 'American Anthology.'

1901. Publication of 'Marlowe,' a poetic drama in five acts, by Houghton, Mifflin & Company; and fourteen poems.

In the fall, started as lecturer on poetry and English literature at Wellesley College.

1902. Spent the summer in England, Scotland, Holland, and Belgium.

1903. Resigned lectureship at Wellesley College.

Publication of 'The Singing Leaves,' a book of Songs and Spells, by Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

Moved to 12 Forest Street, Cambridge.

1904. Wrote 'Pan,' a choric idyll, music by C. A. E. Harriss, published by Novello, produced at a State Farewell Concert to Lord and Lady Minto in Ottawa, Canada, in November.

1905. 'Marlowe' produced at the opening of Agassiz House at Radcliffe College.

1906. Married Lionel S. Marks, Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Harvard University, on June 21st, and went abroad, travelling in Italy, Austria, and then living in Dresden.

1907. In Berlin, followed by travelling in Germany, Belgium, France, England, and Scotland. At Lancaster Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in September.

Publication of 'The Wings,' a one-act poetry play in 'Harper's Magazine' (later in book form by Samuel French).

1908. A daughter, Alison Peabody Marks, born on July 30th.

Publication of 'Book of the Little Past,' a collection of child poems, illustrated by Elizabeth Shippen Green, by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Moved to 88 Lakeview Avenue, Cambridge.

1909. Publication of 'The Piper,' a poetry play in four acts by Houghton Mifflin Company.

1910. A son, Lionel Peabody Marks, born on February 10th.

Won the Stratford Play Competition, against 315 com-

petitors, with 'The Piper.' Went to England for the production at the Stratford Memorial Theatre on May 5th, but the production was postponed on account of the death of Edward VII. Production on July 26th with Frank Benson in title rôle. Travelled in France and Switzerland and returned to America in September. 'The Piper' was played later in London and by three companies in the provinces.

1911. Production of 'The Piper' at The New Theatre on January 30th.

Publication of 'The Singing Man,' by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Moved to 11 Elmwood Avenue, Cambridge, the house later known as 192 Brattle Street.

Death of mother on November 7th.

1912. Production of 'The Wings' at The Toy Theatre, Boston.

1913. To Europe in April and yachting in the Levant, visiting Sicily, Malta, Crete, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Greece. Summer in Italy and Switzerland.

Publication of 'The Wolf of Gubbio,' a poetry play in three acts, by Houghton Mifflin Company.

1914. Φ B K Poem at Tufts College and Election as honorary member of Φ B K.

1916. Publication of 'Harvest Moon,' poems of war and woman, by Houghton Mifflin Company.

1917. Publication of 'The Chameleon,' a prose comedy, by Samuel French.

1921. Wrote 'Song of the Pilgrim Women' for the Plymouth Pageant.

1922. Publication of 'Portrait of Mrs. W.——' a prose play, by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Death on December 4th.

INDEX

Abbott, Holker, 91.
After Music, 108.
Alison's Mother to the Brook, 239.
Ames, Dean, chapel services for, 226.
Athenæum, the, Boston, 29, 30, 94, 147.

Baker, Mrs. B. K., educator, 242.
Baker, George P., letter to, 195.
Barnard, Mr., 147.
Barnard, Mrs., 129.
Bates, Arlo, 91.
Bates, Katherine Lee, letters to, 181, 224, 229, 257, 296.
Blackall, Clarence H., letters to, 107, 108, 256.
Blake, William, collection of, 321.
Book of the Little Past, The, 199, 214, 216, 218, 222.
Boston College Club, 106, 113.
Branch, Anna H., letters to, 99, 158, 240, 259, 278, 285, 320, 327.
Brier Rose, 147.
Brooks, Phillips, 150, 151.
Brown, Abbie Farwell, letters to, 25, 28, 42, 51, 82, 85, 90, 92, 98, 115, 191; short story of, in 'New England Magazine,' 35.
Brown, Alice, 67, 68, 83.
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, Letters reviewed, 85.
Burton, Richard, letter to, 258
Butt, Clara, 126.

Caravans, 28; metre of, criticised by Scudder, 30.
Carducci, Giosuè, 68.
Carlyle, Thomas, his reminiscences of his wife, 73.
Chambers, Robert, his *Book of Days*, 96.
Child, Professor F. J., meeting of Folk-Lore Society at house of, 34; a note from, 36; shows his roses to Miss Peabody, 58, 59; a note and a book from, 60, 61; reads at meeting of English Club, 77; death, 81; Miss Peabody's remembrance of, 81.
Child-actors, bill for protection of, 242.
Condivi, his life of Michelangelo, 68.
Craig, Gordon, his *The Art of the Theatre*, 258.
Criticism, spirit of, 86.
Cupid and Psyche, 82.
Cushing, Miss, 44.

Daily Bread, 101.
Daily Magic, The, 201.
Dante Alighieri, 72.
Daphne, 64, 154.
Darling, Dr., 334.
Dobson, Austin, 167.
Dominion, 290.
Dow, Arthur, 289.
Dream-Climbing, 22.
Dreams, 32, 35, 36.
Dumb Singers, 31.
Dunton, Watts, 167.

Edgartown, Massachusetts, 312, 314.
Eliot, C. W., questions capacity of women for creative scholarship, 58.
Elms, songfulness of, 70.
Enemy Listens, The, 82, 83.
Erving, Dr. Emma Lootz, 242.

Fate, how it was written, 37.
Folk-Lore Society of Cambridge, 33, 34.
Fortune and Men's Eyes, publication of, 8; Professor Grandgent's comments on, 127; Mr. Moody's reception of, 128; praised in the 'Boston Transcript,' 138; the spiritual passion of, 138, 139; reviews of, 147.
Freer, Agnes, letters to, 265, 269.

'Gadfly, The', 130.
Garland, Hamlin, author, 242.
Gibran, Kahlil, 106, 122, 172.
God, the will of, 146, 147.
Goodhue, Bertram, 91.

Goodhue, Harry, 91.
Grandgent, Professor C. H., 54; his comment on *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, 127.
Greenslet, Ferris, letter to, 299.

Hagedorn, Dorothy, 243; letters to, 245, 254.
Hagedorn, Hermann, 243; letters to, 254, 267.
Hamadryad, The, 74.
Hardy, Thomas, 207.
Harrison, Jane, 329.
Hart, Sophie C., letter to, 281.
Harvest Moon, The, 200, 287, 298, 299.
Haskell, Miss, 77.
Herbert, George, quoted, 293.
Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, 35; letters to, 138, 170; death, 244.
Homer, differing effects of different editions of, 70, 71; his 'Odyssey,' 300.
Horizon, 38.
Howe, Julia Ward, death, 234.

In the Doorway, 118.
Irwin, Agnes, 90.

Jackson, Minnie Ward, letter to, 25.
Jones, Elizabeth, letter to, 307.
Jonson, Ben, 23.

Keats, John, differing effects of differing editions of, 70; birthday, 96.
Keeper of the Flame, 290.
Keller, Helen, letter to, 266.
Kitten, picture of, sleeping, 49; verse of poem on, 56.

La Follette, Fola, 242; letter to, 267.
Leopardi, Giacomo, 62, 68.
Literature, difference made in, by newness of type, 70, 71.
Little Side Streets, 203.
Long Lane, 217.
Low Tide, 50.
Lowell, Amy, 275.

Mackaye, Percy, playwright, 242; letter to, 287.
Maeterlinck, Maurice, 62.
Market, 203.
Markham, Mr., 325.
Marks, Alison Peabody, birth, 214–20, 338.
Marks, Amy, letters to, 206, 221, 225, 236.
Marks, Katie, letters to, 242, 244, 326.
Marks, Lionel Peabody, birth, 226, 338; christening of, 232, 234; letter to, 325.
Marks, Lionel S., 338; letters to, 196, 219, 247, 250, 252, 254, 297, 300, 310, 316, 318.
Marks, S. E., letter to, 326.
Marks, Mrs. S. E., letters to, 208, 228; death, 243, 244.
Marlowe, publication of, 8, 157, 158, 160; work on, 137, 145, 146, 149; finished, 154; some explanation of, 156, 157; produced at Radcliffe College, 195.
Marsh, A. R., 109, 110, 127.
Masefield, John, 297, 298.
Mason, Mary, letters to, 76, 87, 91, 109, 111, 112, 119, 122, 126, 129, 131, 143, 146, 149, 183, 186, 224, 261.
Masque of Psyche, 195.
May Morning, 36.
Men Have Wings at Last, 288.
Merritt, Mary E., letter to, 21.
Metrical schemes, 31, 50, 51.
Meynells, the, 167.
Middleton, George, letter to, 267.
Milton, John, 23.
Moody, Harriet, letter to, 322.
Moody, William Vaughn, his expression 'Tell me about it,' 57, 58; his verdict on *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, 128, 129; on Cambridge and art, 199; death, 234.
Morrill, Susan Josephine, Josephine Peabody's mother. *See* Peabody, Mrs. Charles K.
Müller, Margarethe, letters to, 175, 180, 194, 240, 248, 264.
Murdoch, Mr., 44, 66.
Murray, Amy, 219, 221.
Music, the power of, 12, 13, 15–18, 56, 77, 109, 125, 163, 188.

Naomi, 28.

National Alliance for the Protection of Stage Children, 242.
Nichols, Dr., 89.
Nightingale Unheard, 213, 217, 225.
Norton, C. E., 73.

Old Greek Stories, 222.
One Passes in the Dark, 43.

Paderewski, I. J., 73, 75, 77, 78, 109, 163.
Page, Henrietta, letters to, 284, 295, 301, 302, 321.
Pan, performed in Ottawa in 1904, 8.
Peabody, Charles Kilham, Josephine's father, 4, 5, 337.
Peabody, Mrs. Charles K., 4, 5, 337; letters to, 205, 231; death, 256, 339.
Peabody, Ernest, letter to, 232.
Peabody, Francis, grandfather of Josephine, 3, 337.
Peabody, Josephine Preston, her parentage, 3, 4, 337; her grandfather, 3; inherited tendencies of, 3, 4; source of her artistic temperament, 3, 4; her father and mother, 4, 5, 337; her first impetus toward plays, 4, 5; her education, 5, 6; her reading, 6, 7; her likings, 6; longs to be a sharer of the common heart, 7; her ideal of comradeship between man and woman, 8; her writings, 8; harmony of spirit and physical embodiment in, 8; her love of beauty, 9, 109, 124, 125, 131, 144, 160, 163, 188, 189, 192, 259; handwriting of, 9; feels significance of words 10; her feelings on a certain rainy day, 10; longs for physical beauty, 10, 41; lives in state of ecstasy, 11; her eyes fixed on a mirage, 11; studying Greek, 11, 18, 20; effect of sunlight on, 12; thoughts on marriage, 12; feelings on hearing Symphony concerts, 12, 13, 15, 16; love of music, 12–18, 56, 77, 108, 109, 125, 163, 188; getting an education, 13; on the profitableness of a little illness, 13; her first experience of Wagner, 14; visited by revelations, 14; feelings on holding a deserted bird-nest, 14; recollection of childish pleasure in a singing book, 14, 15; on suggestions of shape form in sound combinations, 15; a disappointment, 16, 17; on happiness, 17; eagerness for learning, 18; would be an impressionist in prose, 19; MS. returned from the 'Atlantic,' with note, 19; the martyrdom of womanhood a horror to, 19; her love of reading, 19, 20; desires to be welcomed for herself, 20; receives advice and encouragement from Mr. Scudder, 20–24; enters her 'silence' before writing, 21; detests cards as an amusement, 22; poets most read by, 22, 23; in Florida, 22–32; *The Shepherd Girl* accepted by the 'Atlantic,' 26; reads Roumanian Folk-Songs, 27; learns patience in Florida, 27; on the metre of *Caravans*, 30, 31; appeal of old myths to, 31; a youthful poem of, 31; as regards *The Song-Maker* and *Dreams*, 32, 33; attends meeting of Cambridge Folk-Lore Society with Mr. Scudder, 33, 34; has feeling of caged-up youth, 35; longs for poethood, 35; reads 'King Lear,' 36; how rhymes came to, 37; her 'glimmer moods,' 37, 38; *Two Singers* accepted by 'Youth's Companion,' 38; reading of new books, suggestive to, 39; some books bought by, 39, 59; her obscurity, 39, 101, 140; finds need of closer relationship with life, 39, 40; buys Unabridged Dictionary, 40; finds herself observed, 40, 41; longs for symmetrical life, 41; asked to write series of educational books for children, 43; poem accepted by the 'Independent,' 43; conscious of awakened longing for unreachable things, 44; Mr. Scudder's Radcliffe plan for, 44, 45; cautioned against giving poets too much attention in her verse, 45, 46; days that are unforgettable to, 47; repulsion toward youthful 'wild oats,' 47, 48; effect of Out of Doors upon, 48; effect of the beautiful upon, 49; feels lack of company, 49, 50, 53; some of her metrical schemes, 50, 51; her dependence on

spontaneous inspiration, 52; gives up idea of writing mythological story-book, 54; her work at Radcliffe, 54, 55; effect on, of the sight of distance, 57; Mr. Moody's interest in her thoughts, 57, 58; Professor Child shows his roses to, 58, 59; development of her mind, 59, 60; receives book and note from Professor Child, 60, 61; directness of her conversation, 61; effect of certain authors upon, 62; has inspiring talk with Mr. Scudder, 63; did not early care for reading, 63; imaginative faculty woke before receptive faculty in, 63; impressions of beauty on a ride to Rye Beach, 64; writes on classical subjects, 64; feels her veins full of the blood of poetry, 64; faith of others in, 65, 66; helped by Mr. Scudder's talks and encouragement, 65, 69; working and reading at Rye Beach, 67, 68; hates to be little, 69, 70; finds newness of type a help to enjoyment in reading, 70, 71; does not like to be considered an ornamental member of society, 71; affected by Verlaine, 71, 72; hears Professor Norton lecture, 73; hears Paderewski, 73; hates melancholy, 76; advised by Mr. Scudder not to publish in book form too soon, 79, 80; her remembrance of Professor Child, 81; has 'heart,' 82; meets Alice Brown, 83; reviews Mrs. Browning's Letters, 85; impressed by foreign embroideries, 86; takes lessons in modelling, 89; attends a Festival, 90, 91; publishes *Wayfarers*, 93, 95, 101, 102; reads and learns Sonnets of Shakespeare, 92–94; buys copy of Shakespeare's Tragedies, 95; gathers revelation from peach grown in King Street, 95, 96; meets a man with appreciative knowledge of men, 97; her way of reading history, 97; feeling with regard to the power of her hands, 98; interviewed by reporters, 98, 99; has poem in 'Scribner's', 101; from letter of Mr. Scudder to, relative to *The Wayfarers*, 102; tries to deal with actualities, 103, 108; Mr. Scudder's trust in, 104; invited to read at Boston College Club, 106; desires to do something definite supremely well, 107; calls on Professor Marsh, 109, 110; believes in spiritual poise of women, 110; notes new phase of acquaintance with Shakespeare, 112; reads to Boston College Club, 113; writing a play, 115, 116; how she regarded death, 117; her views on American poetry, 120, 122; does not find words a bondage, 121; instinctive tendency toward the dramatic form in her poetry, 123, 124, 127, 161, 191; on the psychology of the crowd, 124; feels sense of spiritual refreshment, 125; recognizes justness of Professor Grandgent's comments, 127; finds she is considered to have good looks, 128; on the transfiguration of love, 129; advised to write about things objective, 131; on the blessing of admiration, 132, 133; her subjective and her objective mind, 133; her joy in work, 134, 272–74, 282; on the morning sense, 134, 135; a dramatic device of, 136; changes in her poetic style, 137; has had difficulty in writing frankly, 140; on sorrow and joy, 141; in a mood of melancholy, 142; on truth and half-truth, 144; on the substantiality of the Spirit, 146; on the will of God, 146, 147; socially petted, 149; on the need of an Idea of Incarnate Good, 150; her sense of delight in a new place, 151, 152; gives courses at Wellesley College, 153, 158, 159, 161, 163, 170–73; as a giver, 159; in England, 164–70; invited to give talks, 170; song *To Lillian Shuman*, 171; on our Identity, 174, 175; chafes at poverty, 177; her home at 36 Linnæan Street, 178, 179; publishing *The Singing Leaves*, 182–86; strife with poverty, 184–87; her always 'happy' face, 187; urge toward poetry, 191, 192; in middle life, 199, 200; marriage, 199; sympathy with labor, suffrage, and cause of peace, 199; her works in middle

period of life, 199, 200; has difficulty in composing, 202; in Europe, 203–08; received by husband's family, 205, 206; in her new home at 18 Lancaster Street, Cambridge, 208–11; reads St. Augustine's 'Confessions,' 211; reads Sabatier, 212; on the Shropshire Lad, 213; her first born, 214–20; on the delight of writing again, 217; her blue harp, 221, 223; joins the Fabians, 221; sympathy with the poor, 221, 222; on what should be set to a child, 224; considered to have progressive and radical ideas, 225; birth of second child, 226; wins Stratford Prize, 227, 229–31; christening of child in Stratford Church, 232, 234; *The Piper* produced at Stratford, 233, 234; *The Piper* produced in New York, 235–38; gives reading of *The Piper* in New York, 242; lectures on child-acting, 242; in new house, 243, 245, 246; alone at home, 248–56; death of mother, 256, 257; on Gordon Craig's *The Art of the Theatre*, 258; thoughts before an operation, 259, 260; on the heart beat, 265; her eagerness to be helping, 269; goes on yachting trip, 269–71; on fellowship and friendship, 277, 278; her Φ B K poem at Tufts College, 282, 290; on the outbreak of War, 283–86; her feeling for womanhood, 284–86; at work on War Poems, 287, 288, 296–99; takes to painting, 289; her last years, 293, 294; her grief at thought of leaving work at death, 295; on Masefield, 297; instructs her children in reading and music, 300, 301; her delight in Maine estate, 301, 302, 318–20; on the curative power of new work with creative zest, 304–06; does modelling, 304–10; has plenitude of ideas, 311; instructs children in Greek, 312–17; miserable over War-work futility, 315; enjoyment of quiet and seclusion, 317, 318; averse to writing prose, 322; dislike to criticise, 322, 323; has difficulty in working, 323, 326; pays uncle's debts, 325; illness, 328, 334, 335; gives tea to class from Tufts College, 333; chronology of events and publications, 337–39.

Peabody, Marion Louise, sister of Josephine, 337; quoted on Francis Peabody, 3; home from Italy, 325.

Penelope, 67, 68.

Perry, Lilla Cabot, letter to, 311.

Perry, Rachel, letters to, 263, 332.

Perry, Ralph Barton, letters to, 263, 332.

Perry, T. S., 312.

Persephone, 31.

Pierce, Winthrop, 91.

Piper, The, Stratford Prize Play, 199, 226, 227, 230; at work on, 204, 221; published, 224; English production of, 230–33; produced at New Theatre, New York, 235–38; ninth edition of, 241; reading of, in Washington, 242.

Pity, 87, 88.

Poetry, meant to be read aloud, 113; American, 120; sonnet form no bond to creative impulse, 121.

Portrait of Mrs. W., 293, 309, 310, 323, 324, 326, 332, 333.

Quiet, The, 120.

Quinby, H. C., 42.

Raleigh, Walter, 96.

Ravens, The, 171.

Resurgam, 118.

Rice, Harriet, 43.

Robbins, Mrs. Raymond, 259.

Robinson, E. A., 131.

Rossetti, Dante, 35.

Royalty, 40.

Royle, Mr., playwright and actor, 242.

Rye Beach, impressions of beauty on a ride to, 64.

Sabatier, Paul, 212, 282.

Sachs, Meta, letter to, 329.

St. Augustine, his 'Confessions,' 211.

Sapling, 154.

Sargent, John, 167.

Schauffler, Robert, 260.

Scudder, Horace E., accepts poem of Miss Peabody, 6; gives advice and encouragement to Miss Peabody, 20–24; criticises poems of Miss Pea-

body, 30, 31; invites Miss Peabody to meeting of Cambridge Folk-Lore Society, 33, 34; his Radcliffe plan for Miss Peabody, 44, 45; cautions against making poets the theme of verse, 45; talks inspiringly with Miss Peabody, 63; his affection for Art, 65, 69; advises Miss Peabody not to publish in book form too soon, 79, 80; from letter of, relative to *The Wayfarers*, 102; his trust in Miss Peabody, 104; passages from letters from, 45, 102; letters to, 20, 22, 27, 30, 32, 36, 46, 48, 53, 67, 69, 74, 79, 83, 88, 93, 103, 155, 157.
Scudder, Mrs. H. E., 34.
Selden, Dixie, letters to, 306, 314, 331.
Shakespeare, William, 36; differing effects of different editions of, 70; Sonnets, 92–94, 120; facsimile reprint of first folio, 95; a new phase of acquaintance with, 112; celebration of his Day, 114; his spirit, 151; his birthplace, 165–70; as food for children, 300, 301.
Shepherd Girl, The, accepted by the 'Atlantic,' 23, 26, 27, 30; how it was written, 37.
Sherman, Frederic F., letters to, 5, 6, 10, 101, 105, 117, 139, 184, 218.
Shuman, Lillian, letters to, 164, 167, 171, 173, 176, 178, 186, 187, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 213.
Silence, The, 118.
Singing Leaves, 8, 148, 182; sixth edition of, 241.
Singing Man, The, 200, 226; finished, 223; in 'The American Magazine,' 239; getting volume in shape, 243, 247; its message, 266.
Song of the Pilgrim Women, 293.
Song-Maker, The, 32, 36.
Sothern, E. H., 156.
Sound combinations, suggestions of shape form in, 15.
Spinning Woman, The, 271.
Stedman, Edmund Clarence, letters to, 153, 160.
Stevens, Dr., 333, 334.
Stoddard, Richard Henry, reviews *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, 147.
Stratford Prize Play. *See Piper, The.*
Sunset, 54.
Sweeney, Margaret, letters to, 303, 308.
Swinburne, A. C., 167.
Symphony concerts, 12, 15.

Tennyson, Alfred, differing effects of different editions of, 71.
Theocritus, translation of, 97; reading, 270, 313.
Thomas, Augustus, playwright, 242.
Titanic, the, 261.
Torrance, Ridgely, letter to, 203.
Two Singers, accepted by the 'Youth's Companion,' 38.
Type, difference in literature made by newness of, 70, 71.

Vacaresco, Hélène, 'The Bard of the Dimbo-Vitza,' 27.
Vender of Doves, The, 27.
Verlaine, Paul, 62, 63, 71, 72.

Wagner, Richard, a first experience of his music, 14; effect of his music, 56.
Walker, Howard, 91.
Water Carrier, The, 27.
Wayfarers, The, quoted, 7; publication of, 8, 93, 95, 101; first draught of, finished, 75, 76; from letter of Mr. Scudder relative to, 102; letters to Mr. Sherman on, 105.
Weavers, The, how it was written, 24, 28, 37.
Webster, Hollis, 91.
Webster, Marion, 91.
Wellesley College, burning of College Hall at, 281.
Whitman, Walt, 62.
Wilkins, Mary, 68.
Wings, 8, 188, 192, 194, 195.
Wolf of Gubbio, The, 200, 268, 278, 280; at work on, 239–41, 262, 265, 272, 274.
Woman of Three Sorrows, 19, 163; how it was written, 37, 135.
Wordsworth, William, his self-satisfaction and lack of humor, 23.

Young, Stark, letters to, 273, 275, 289.
Young Hope, 74.

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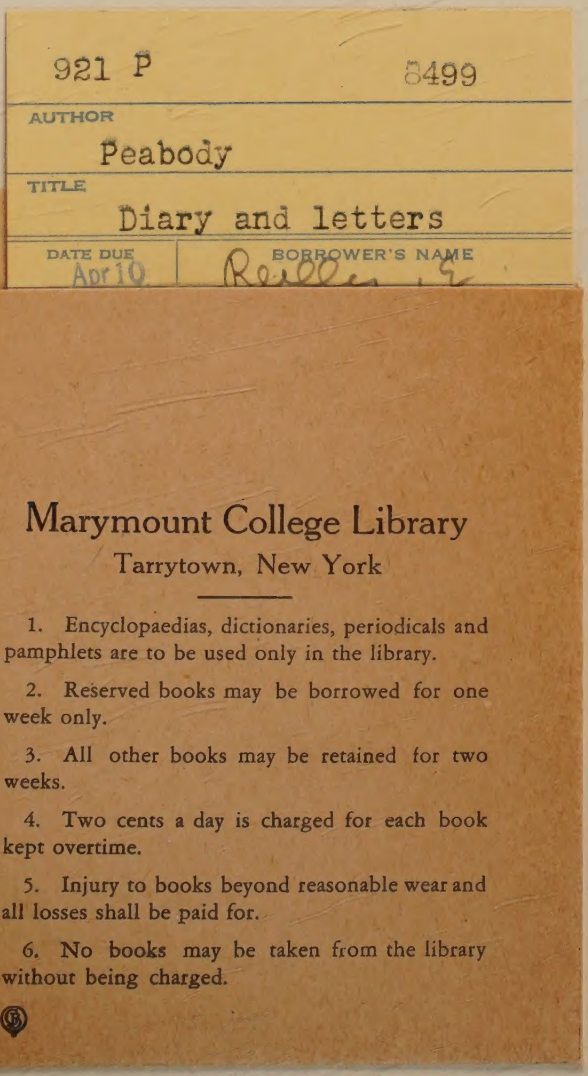
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